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Clerical Characters in Shakespeare's Plays.

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CLERICAL CHARACTERS IN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

A Dissertation

**Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

in

The Department of English

by

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ABSTRACT

This study of the clerical characters of Shakespeare's plays analyzes their roles and functions in dramatic conflict and in the development of theme and meaning, their contribution to the exposition of Shakespeare's political and moral ideas, and their uses in specific dramaturgical situations. As a category of characters, clerics bulk large in Shakespeare's plays. Every one of the ten English history plays has at least one, and most have several. In some instances they are major figures in the conflict, and they frequently enunciate important thematic motifs. The comedies and tragedies have comparatively fewer clerical characters, and these generally have less important roles in the action and resulting theme. A notable exception to this rule among the comedies is Duke Vincentio of Measure for Measure, who is the dominant character in the action and the force behind the moral resolution of the conflicts. In the comedies clerics tend to be either conventional clerics performing conventional clerical offices, such as Friar Francis of Much Ado about Nothing and the Priest in Twelfth Night, or figures of fun whose clerical office is incidental, such as Sir Nathaniel of Love's Labors Lost and Sir Hugh of The Merry Wives of Windsor. The tragedies have

only two clerics with speaking parts, but one of these, Friar Laurence of Romeo and Juliet, is a major figure in development of both plot and theme. Clerical characters in twenty-one plays are treated, their employment ranging from mere mention to central dramatic and thematic significance.

The principle of organization employed in the study is a mixture of the approach by type of play, the order of composition in Shakespeare's career, and similarity of dramatic function. The clerics of the English histories are examined first. The progression follows the order of composition, one chapter treating the First Tetralogy and King John, another the Second Tetralogy and Henry VIII. The next chapter examines a group of "manipulating friars," clerics who play an important role in plot development. Chief among these are Friar Laurence and Duke Vincentio. Similarity of function characterizes the clerics of this segment. The succeeding chapter treats a number of clerical figures who have little coherence as a group, ranging from Aemilia of The Comedy of Errors through the Priest in Hamlet to the Priest in Twelfth Night. Included in this group are Sir Oliver Martext, Sir Nathaniel, and Sir Hugh, comical parsons.

One of the major results of the study is the demonstration that Shakespeare employs clerics in a wide range of roles and dramatic uses. When introduced at all they are usually employed in some dramatically or thematically

significant way. The clerics are generally presented respectfully by the dramatist and are so treated by the other characters. Even in the English histories, which contain the largest number of clerics whose actions might subject them to audience disapproval or whose actions are viewed unfavorably by their fellows, Shakespeare exercises considerable balance of presentation. Clerics who perform actions that might be regarded unfavorably are characteristically offset by other admirable clerics, or they are allowed to show qualities that mitigate their failings. The varied roles of clerics and the dramatically important roles of some of them add richness and variety to the plays.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Of the multitudinous ways in which one can approach Shakespeare's plays, a perennially popular approach has been study of character. Even as one recognizes the difficulties inherent in that approach--that the characters are not real people but dramatic creations performing functions limited to the world of the play; that other aspects of the drama are of equal, if not more, importance; that character, perhaps more than any other element of drama, invites subjective judgment, to name only a few--one nonetheless feels that the people who inhabit Shakespeare's dramatic world are eminently deserving of close examination and analysis. And critics have felt that way for a long time, so that probably every character and certainly every important character and category of characters has received some measure of attention. The richer ones--Hamlet, for instance--are continually being interpreted and reinterpreted without exhaustion of the possibilities.

One major category of characters in Shakespeare's plays, a category which, like all others, has received attention but which, again like all others, is not yet ex-

hausted, is Shakespeare's clerics. In the basic system of classification of the plays set up by Heminges and Condell in the First Folio--comedies, histories, and tragedies--clerical figures play a part in all. The English histories, based as they were on chronicle accounts which tended to focus the historical narrative on the lives and actions of powerful men, are of necessity filled with clerics, frequently active in both church and state and reflections of an age in which spiritual and secular power had not yet been separated. Thus, in the First Tetralogy¹ Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester and later Cardinal, haunts the pages of 1 and 2 Henry VI and the conscience of the weak but saintly king. When Richard of Gloucester finally achieves the crown, archbishops, bishops, and priests are manipulated along with secular powers to his own personal ends. In the Second Tetralogy the Lancastrian rebels against Richard II, now legitimate (at least in their own view), are in turn assailed by forces led by the Archbishop of York, forces that fulfill the Bishop of Carlisle's prophecy of dire consequences that will follow should Richard II be deposed. Henry V, who in his life and reign must expiate the curse placed upon the usurping House of Lancaster, politicly obtains the blessing of Holy Church before undertaking the conquest of France. In the two English histories that do not belong to the connected

¹On the question of the Shakespeare canon I am following what seems to be a growing trend in accepting the authority of the First Folio.

tetralogies, King John and Henry VIII, potent clerics come in conflict with the English crown. The English histories, in short, have a large number of clerical figures playing important roles.

The comedies and tragedies have comparatively fewer clerical characters, and these, with several notable exceptions, have relatively less important roles in the action and resulting theme of the plays than do the clerics of the histories. The comedies through The Merry Wives have only one cleric who exercises a central plot function, Friar Francis in Much Ado, who reflects something of the much graver and greater role of Friar Laurence in Romeo and Juliet. Sir Nathaniel and Sir Hugh Evans add little to the plots of their plays but much to the fun. In Measure for Measure, however, the Duke in his role as manipulating friar, and Isabella, votaress of the Poor Clares, who is dragged from her devotions into the midst of a most worldly sordidness, are major characters. Similarly, the would-be peacemaker Friar Laurence has a vital role, unique for a clerical figure among the tragedies. In only one other tragedy does a cleric appear in a speaking role at all: the Priest in Hamlet. Chronologically, clerics are conspicuous by their absence after Measure for Measure, the single exception being the late history, Henry VIII.

Despite the disappearance of clerics from the plays after about 1604, their distribution and function throughout the plays in which they appear offer the investigator a representative selection among Shakespeare's three basic

kinds of drama and a wide range of characters and functions in the plays. The major purpose of this study is to analyze Shakespeare's handling of these figures in terms of their employment in dramatic conflict, their role in the development of theme and meaning, their contribution to the exposition of Shakespeare's political and moral ideas, and their function in specific dramaturgical situations.

Given the wide range of characters and dramatic functions of the clerics, scattered as they are through plays of various types during some two-thirds of Shakespeare's career, the problem of coherent approach and treatment bulks large. Principles of organization so clear and logical as the chronological approach, the approach by major types of play, or the approach by artistic or biographical periods do not always in themselves have the flexibility required of the diverse mixture of characters and functions. Accordingly, although all of these approaches will be employed as an organizing principle when possible, at times characters who perform similar functions, even though they may be separated by type of play and period in Shakespeare's development, such as Friar Laurence and Duke Vincentio, will be grouped for analysis and discussion. Particularly will this method be employed with minor characters.

The clerics of the English history plays are taken up first. Here the progression follows the order of composition, ranging in Chapter II from the early First Tetralogy to King John, which will be shown as a transitional play

between the two tetralogies. Chapter III will cover the Second Tetralogy and Shakespeare's last English history play, Henry VIII.

Chapter IV will include clerical characters from both comedy and tragedy, the chief principle of organization and presentation being similarity of plot function, but the organizing principle of time of composition will be employed when possible. Thus, the early appearance of the helpful friar in Two Gentlemen of Verona leads into Friar Laurence; and Friar Francis of Much Ado about Nothing looks back to Laurence and forward to Vincentio in Measure for Measure.

Chapter V has the least obviously methodical principle of unity, coherence, and logical progression underlying it, dealing as it does with such diverse characters as Aemilia in the quite early Comedy of Errors and the spurious Sir Topas of Twelfth Night. All of the characters in this chapter have relatively slight plot function, although they frequently have significant thematic function. At their center are a pair of amiable parsons, Sir Nathaniel of Love's Labor's Lost and Sir Hugh Evans of Merry Wives.

Chapter VI, the final chapter, will draw some conclusions concerning Shakespeare's dramatic employment of clerical characters and hazard some observations on his attitudes toward them. The study will attempt no final judgment as to Shakespeare's specific religion, it being

felt that such a question is best left to the angels.²

²My statement is not meant to imply that those who have an opinion and state it illustrate thereby a famous line of Alexander Pope's. I have an opinion myself. Some representative types of statements on the matter follow: "There can be no reasonable doubt that Shakspeare was a member of the Reformed Church of England. . . ." Charles Wordsworth, On Shakspeare's Knowledge and Use of the Bible (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1864), p. 222. "The probability is that he supported the established Anglican Church. . . ." F. E. Halliday, The Life of Shakespeare (1961; rpt. Baltimore: Penguin Books, Pelican Series, 1963), p. 254. "Whether he was Anglican or Roman Catholic, whether he was devout or a nominal conformist, does not really interest me." Virgil K. Whitaker, The Mirror up to Nature: The Technique of Shakespeare's Tragedies (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1965), p. 152. See also Robert Elliot Fitch, Shakespeare: The Perspective of Value (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969), pp. 261-62 (n.), for a listing of opinions as to Shakespeare's specific religious leaning by most writers who have expressed them.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST TETRALOGY AND KING JOHN

1 Henry VI

Hung be the heavens with black, yield day to night!
Comets, importing change of times and states,
Brandish your crystal tresses in the sky,
And with them scourge the bad revolting stars
That have consented unto Henry's death!
King Henry the Fifth, too famous to live long!
England ne'er lost a king of so much worth.¹
(1 Hen. VI I.i.1-6)¹

On this elegiac note begins the first of three plays centered around the reign of the most unheroic Henry VI, son of the hero-king Henry V. The gloom of the opening lines extends from the funereal pomp and the black hangings of the stage throughout the entire tetralogy which is thus initiated, for in the Henry the Sixth plays and their sequel, Richard III, England is to suffer turmoil, travail, and tyranny unsurpassed in its history. These ills will end only through the mercy of God in sending Henry Richmond to overthrow the wicked Richard Crookback and to establish both civil order and the succession to the crown.²

¹Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from the plays are from Shakespeare: The Complete Works, ed. G. B. Harrison (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968).

²The view of the First Tetralogy as a coherent whole

But the Tudor peace is far in the future as the kinsmen of the young king--the Duke of Bedford, Regent of France; the Duke of Gloucester, Protector to the tender new monarch; the Bishop of Winchester; the Duke of Exeter--lament, along with other personages, the death of the puissant Henry V. The kinsmen all make short mourning speeches. They mourn, but not for long: the factionalism that is to be a major theme in both initial play³ and tetralogy rears its head before fifty lines have been spoken. Appropriately enough, since one tragedy of the civil wars of the fifteenth century was that they arrayed family members against each other, at one time even the King and Queen, it is Henry VI's uncle Gloucester and great-uncle Winchester who first speak against each other, beginning a "jar" that will end for them only with their deaths and for England only after bloody internecine war and tyranny have wracked the realm. The charges of the two kinsmen against each other spring from rivalry over just who is going to

thematically, despite its episodic structure and as yet unperfected dramaturgy, seems to be standard opinion these days. See, for example, Irving Ribner, The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare, rev. ed. (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1965), p. 95; T. W. Baldwin, On the Literary Genetics of Shakspeare's Plays, 1592-1594 (Urbana: The Univ. of Illinois Press, 1959), pp. 380-81; Whitaker, The Mirror up to Nature, p. 16. For a minority view, see S. C. Sen Gupta, Shakespeare's Historical Plays (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1964), p. 18.

³Whether 1 Henry VI was composed before or after the other two parts of the series, it was structured as the first in the form in which we have it. For a survey of critical views on the histories during the first half of this century, see Harold Jenkins, "Shakespeare's History Plays, 1900-1951," Shakespeare Survey, 6 (1953), 1-14.

guide the young king and therefore the fortunes of England, recognized as being in parlous condition now that Harry of Monmouth is no more. Gloucester begins it with an angry denial that the church's prayers were the source of Henry V's prosperity, as piously and somewhat selfishly asserted by the Bishop of Winchester, maintaining instead that, rather than praying for Henry V's health, Winchester had prayed that he might die so that the Bishop could overawe his young heir.⁴ Winchester flings the challenge back, pointing out that it is Gloucester who is Protector and therefore closest to young Henry, charging further that Gloucester is more in awe of his proud wife than of God or Church.⁵ The jar is broken by Bedford, who attempts to bring the angry lords back to the proper business at hand, the mourning of the dead king. While Bedford, in dramatically appropriate sentiments, invokes the ghost of the dead king, praying that it keep the realm from civic broils, another interruption comes--this time in a succession of three messengers from France. Their tidings serve as dramatic intensification of the evils of civil dissension of the type just seen in the Gloucester-Winchester mutual recriminations. Indeed, the first messenger announces the

⁴T. F. Thiselton Dyer, Folk-lore of Shakespeare, (New York: Harper, 1884), p. 372, states that "in the olden time" the prayers of the Church for the recovery of the sick were also supposed to have a morbid influence. It would appear that Gloucester has some such idea in mind.

⁵This early foreshadowing of what is to be a major episode of 2 Henry VI and an important part in Gloucester's public humiliation and fall is only one of many links between plays within the tetralogy.

crowning of the Dauphin Charles and wide-spread support of him among French nobles previously allied with England. The reason why such losses and fallings-away could occur--the play repeatedly makes the point--is shown in Gloucester's reaction to the news, a reaction by which Gloucester intends to show heroic resolve but which implies a lack of trust and cooperation among the leaders of England that is the source of her sickness:

We will not fly, but to our enemies' throats.
Bedford, if thou be slack, I'll fight it out.
(I.i.98-99)

A third messenger brings news of the capture of Talbot, and the discomfiture of England abroad is shown to be complete. The scene ends with resolute speeches by three of the four kinsmen--Bedford, Gloucester, and Exeter--who set off hastily on errands of state. The stage is left to Winchester, who ominously enough for the future of England both at home and abroad, leaves no doubt as to how the audience is intended to feel about him in his long struggle with Gloucester, despite the shortcomings of the latter. Sourly, he observes in this moment of crisis:

Each hath his place and function to attend.
I am left out; for me nothing remains.
But long I will not be Jack out of office.
The King from Eltham I intend to steal
And sit at chiefest stern of public weal.
(I.i.173-77)⁶

In this first scene, then, a major theme of both play

⁶My analysis of the developing conflict in this scene owes much to Ernest William Talbert, Elizabethan Drama and Shakespeare's Early Plays (Chapel Hill: Univ. of N. Carolina Press, 1963), pp. 165-67.

and tetralogy is introduced: the sapping of English strength because of internal dissension. More important to the purposes of this study, the deadly factionalism is shown to be centered initially in the Protector of the King and a man of noble blood who is soon to be a prince of the church, the Bishop of Winchester. Shakespeare was of course following his chronicle sources in showing the bitterness between Protector and Bishop. But the four principals of this scene--Gloucester, Winchester, Bedford, and Exeter--all powerful men in the kingdom and heirs with Henry VI of responsibility for its welfare, have a symbolic value and function in the theme and meaning. Gloucester can be thought of as representing in this scene the political body of England, Winchester the ecclesiastical, and Bedford, Regent of France, the military.⁷ Exeter throughout the play exercises a sort of choric function, frequently voicing the wisdom and concern that characterized the old order of Henry V. His voice is not heeded; for civil discord and the loss of influence abroad and unity at home are to dominate this play.

A second major purpose of 1 Henry VI is to depict English heroism in the old warrior Talbot and to demonstrate that England would not have fallen into political and moral confusion at home and abroad had the spirit of Talbot prevailed.⁸ Events in France occupy the bulk of the action.

⁷I am indebted for this suggestion to John P. Cutts, The Shattered Glass: A Dramatic Pattern in Shakespeare's Early Plays (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1968), p. 109. In the play as a whole, however, the military spirit of England seems better represented by Talbot.

⁸E. M. W. Tillyard, Shakespeare's History Plays (1944;

In the loosely-structured narrative of the chronicle that Shakespeare adapts to dramatic form, however, many bright threads are woven to form various complex patterns, and Shakespeare uses many of these threads even though he greatly simplifies and compresses the narrative in casting it in dramatic form. Not only Gloucester on the one hand and Winchester⁹ on the other, but practically every character in the play thinks of his own prerogatives, prejudices, and opportunities for power and influence first and the welfare of the realm, of Respublica, second. Among these are the Earl of Somerset and Richard Plantagenet, later Duke of York, who in the famous Temple Garden scene pluck red and white roses, respectively, thereby beginning the War of the Roses. The red rose of Lancaster and the white rose of York ultimately come to represent the broad lines into which the rival forces dress themselves, but in the turbulent period represented by the First Tetralogy nothing is simple: shifting loyalties, intrigue, and treachery mark the action. It is Somerset and Plantagenet's rivalry and consequent neglect of Talbot's forces in France which lead most directly to the

rpt. New York: Macmillan, 1947), p. 163, states that 1 Henry VI might be better distinguished as a play had it been entitled "The Tragedy of Talbot." But he denies that Talbot is the hero, reserving that function in the First Tetralogy for England or Respublica after the fashion of the Morality Play.

⁹Winchester is a politician first and a churchman second, if at all, a fact noted by a number of critics. Even Elbridge Colby, English Catholic Poets: Chaucer to Dryden (1936; rpt. Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1967), p. 111, who regards the churchmen in a more sympathetic light than do most critics, concurs.

English defeat there. Thus the achievement of unity at home and maintenance of the military success abroad of King Henry V are alike shattered. Other strands of complication in 1 Henry VI, complications which bode ill for the future of England, are provided by Suffolk and his aim to control the crown through Margaret, the ill-chosen wife of the impulsive Henry, and the machinations of Warwick the Kingmaker, whose shifting loyalties are to encourage first one side, then another, through much of the tetralogy.

The initial dissension of the play, however, and that most pertinent to this study, is the ominous wrangling between Gloucester and Winchester. After Act I, Scene i, just looked at, the depiction of affairs in England is interrupted by a scene abroad showing Joan of Arc winning over the Dauphin. This scene is important to the development of the English troubles in France, a military and political deterioration that parallels the growing discord and turbulence at home. The latter picks up again in Scene iii and is centered, as in Scene i, on Gloucester and Winchester. The third scene may indeed have been intended to follow directly upon the first in time, with the Pucelle-Dauphin scene being intended as simultaneous action, for Gloucester at the end of Scene i had announced that he was off to the Tower. He arrives there in Scene iii only to find himself and his men barred from entry by Winchester's orders. The two forces engage in an altercation of both words and actions, the words coming from the two jealous lords and the

and Humphrey to Cain, and finally threatens Humphrey with the power of the Pope, a threat which during the fifteenth century might have had some force in England but which, in the last decade of the sixteenth, on the London stage, was not likely to gain a dramatic character who used it against another much sympathy. The fray ceases only when the Mayor of London reads the riot act. The Mayor states the point of the scene in his rueful comment which ends it: "Good God, these nobles should such stomachs bear!/ I myself fight not once in forty year" (I.iii.90-91).

Despite the fact that the significance of the scene lies in the confrontation and resultant discord, it also develops further the characters of the two enemies along the lines set forth in Scene i. There the occasion somewhat muted both the choler of Humphrey, which is his most dominant--and deplorable--trait,¹² and the rancor and rapacity of the Cardinal; here they are allowed full expression. The Cardinal, comparatively, comes off much the worse. In the first place, the Protector has a far better right to enter the chief military stronghold of the city, London Tower, than does the Cardinal, yet there is Beaufort inside giving orders to exclude him. Again, despite the fact that Humphrey has at least as much provocation to wrath as the Cardinal--a wrath fully shown in his vitupera-

¹²Talbert, Elizabethan Drama, p. 179, says that "angry honor" was a common trait among pictures of illustrious persons and may have been intended as a generic rather than an individualizing feature. Thus, Gloucester's portrayal might seem more complex to our age than to Elizabeth's.

tions--he is characterized as essentially a law-abiding and peace-loving man, whereas the Cardinal is the reverse. To Gloucester's "Cardinal, I'll be no breaker of the law;/ But we shall meet and break our minds at large" (ll. 80-81), Beaufort replies, "Gloucester, we will meet--to thy cost, be sure./ Thy heart blood will I have for this day's work" (ll. 82-83). In 2 Henry VI he does. Even the Mayor of London seems to take sides, saying, "This Cardinal's more haughty than the Devil" (l. 85). Thus, lamentable as the civil jars are as depicted here--and they will get worse--Gloucester seems to come out a better man even in this scene than will most of the power-hungry men surrounding the king, particularly his chief adversary.¹³

¹³ Perhaps the reader is not intended to make moral judgments in such a sorry situation. After all, England is the true sufferer. Robert Y. Turner, "Shakespeare and the Public Confrontation Scene in Early History Plays," Modern Philology, 62 (August 1964), 9, thinks that in general Shakespeare added moral significance to the dramatic pattern of challenge and counter-challenge he learned from Marlowe. In the confrontation under discussion the two combatants see each other as misusers of power rather than opponents whose defeat will increase their own power. The confrontation thus produces a balanced, complex, shifting moral response. Hermann Ulrici, Shakespeare's Dramatic Art: History and Character of Shakespeare's Plays, trans. L. Dora Schmitz (London: George Bell, 1904), II, 266, makes the general point that "Gloster's honest, high-minded, and truly patriotic nature is . . . carried away by party spirit and passion." M. M. Reese, Shakespeare: His World and His Work (London: Edward Arnold, 1964), pp. 501-02, thinks that the poetry of the early plays allows for little individualization and that in these plays one cannot tell for sure that a character believes what he is saying. Thomas Marc Parrott, Shakespearean Comedy (New York: Russell and Russell, 1949), pp. 209-10, sees this scene as "slap-stick action," comedy so effective that it was repeated at the beginning of Act III. In all of these observations, those who comment directly on this scene make no moral judgment on Beaufort solely on the basis of the action here.

At this point in the play the Gloucester-Cardinal feud is dropped for a time while other events occupy the stage. The Earl of Salisbury is killed by a lucky French shot; Pucelle takes and loses Orleans; the Countess of Auvergne meets her match in the doughty Talbot. In II.iv the Temple Garden scene initiates both literally and symbolically the ultimate factionalism of the tetralogy, a factionalism that will be stilled only by the Tudor settlement. Thematically allied to the developing conflict in the Temple Garden scene is the action in II.v, in which the dying Mortimer, tracing the wrong done to his house back to the Lancastrian usurpation of the throne of Richard II, makes Plantagenet his heir. Following closely upon this is III.i, the chief business of which is Henry's recognizing Plantagenet's rights to the Dukedom of York. From this point on England will be plagued by the ambitions of the Duke, already with hopes for the crown stirring in his breast and power falling into his hands. Although the struggle will go on for a long time and will sway back and forth, and although Plantagenet will wear only a mock crown of paper instead of the crown of England he hankers after, his sons will be kings (like Banquo's victory). Henry VI will live for two more plays beyond this one, and in the next act of this play will be triumphantly crowned at Paris by Cardinal Beaufort, but the central conflict of his life and reign, to which that of Gloucester and Beaufort are mere prelude and diminishing fall, has already begun.

The prelude has not yet begun to diminish in III.i, however, despite the fact that recognition of York is the main business of the scene, for Gloucester and Winchester renew the wrangle that had begun at Henry V's funeral and had continued in the gates of London Tower. It is now resumed before Parliament. The occasion is Gloucester's attempt to present a bill of particulars against the Cardinal, which bill the Cardinal snatches and tears. Instead of the premeditated, written charge, he demands that Humphrey make verbal charges, which the Cardinal will answer with "sudden and extemporal speech."¹⁴ Humphrey rises to the challenge, and in an eighteen-line speech that might be a character in the Jacobean manner headed "A Bold Bad Priest"¹⁵ accuses the Cardinal of pride, usury, forwardness, love of war, lasciviousness, wantonness, attempted murder of Gloucester, and evil intentions against the King. Winchester, who could hardly be expected to offer anything other than a

¹⁴ Ifor Evans, The Language of Shakespeare's Plays (London: Methuen, 1952), p. 32, notes that this use of the word "extemporal" is the third and last time Shakespeare ever used it, its two previous uses being comic in Love's Labors Lost. He links its use here and abandonment thereafter with Shakespeare's growing realization that action, as in the histories, and not "the dance of words," as in Love's Labors Lost, is his true dramatic bent.

¹⁵ John M. Lothian, Shakespeare's Character: A Book of "Characters" from Shakespeare (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1966), pp. 93-94. Sigurd Burckhardt, Shakespearean Meanings (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1968), pp. 49-50, reads Gloucester's speech as a "counter-taunt" in the ceremonial mode, a mode which might be used on practically any occasion but which, when used, tends to make an "occasion" of whatever it lends itself to. It is especially prevalent in the early plays, in which Shakespeare tends to substitute rhetoric for dramatic action and carefully differentiated speech.

selective defense to all this,¹⁶ defends himself to the assembled lords on two counts: he cannot be covetous or ambitious, because he is poor and keeps his "wonted calling"; and as for being an enemy to peace, no person prefers peace--unless he be provoked--more than he. Humphrey's real reason for the attack before Parliament, the Cardinal repeats, is the Protector's desire to be the only person having the king's ear.

This renewed Gloucester-Winchester outbreak is immediately shown to be what it really has been all along, only a part of a larger whole. Warwick speaks out against Winchester's "Rome shall remedy this" with a pun, "Roam thither, then," and is upheld in an aside by Plantagenet who, not yet Duke of York, remains quiet for now.¹⁷ Somerset, who had plucked the red Lancastrian rose in Temple Garden, sides against Warwick with Winchester, putting his stand on the proper deference due to a prince of the church. In effect, from Gloucester's viewpoint, Winchester's only champion is Somerset. Gloucester will be proved sadly

¹⁶Milton Boone Kennedy, The Oration in Shakespeare (Chapel Hill: Univ. of N. Carolina Press, 1942), finds a total of eighty-three orations in all the plays, of which forty-eight are from the histories, twenty-one from the tragedies, and fourteen from the comedies. These orations he classifies as forensic, deliberative, and demonstrative, there being, respectively, eighteen, twenty, and forty-five of these types (Table V, p. 71). Of the eighteen forensic orations, five are made by clerics, of which Winchester's defense here is one (Table I, p. 67). Kennedy notes that this oration is brief and inconclusive.

¹⁷Talbert, Elizabethan Drama, p. 180, states that Plantagenet is "with an audience against plotting Catholicism, which has just been associated derisively with Rome."

wrong, for in the York-Lancaster broil, soon to be under way, Humphrey will find no effective champions, not even the King. Now, just as the King is pleading with his two kinsmen, observing that their jars are a scandal to the crown and that "Civil dissension is a viperous worm/ That gnaws the bowels of the commonwealth" (III.i.72-73), a noise outside shows the accuracy of the King's lament; it is the followers of Humphrey and Winchester fighting, just as in II.iii. Again the Mayor of London pleads for peace, and again Gloucester proves the more tractable of the two, commanding his followers to disperse as King Henry pleads with Winchester to relent for his sake. Winchester forces Gloucester to offer his hand first, and only after renewed entreaty by the King and chiding by Warwick extends his own. Gloucester in an aside is doubtful of Winchester's sincerity, but publicly calls for the assembled company in the Parliament House to witness the truce. He ends, "So help me God, as I dissemble not!" Winchester in an aside makes an oath also, "So help me God as I intend it not!" The scene concludes with one of Exeter's characteristic choric soliloquies in which he sees the dissension as not dead, only buried under ashes of feigned love, from whence it will break to bring about the prophecy that Harry of Windsor would lose all that Harry of Monmouth had gained.

Exeter's soliloquy refers first of all to the Gloucester-Winchester broil, just forced to a temporary stand-off. It also refers to the false concord of the crowd over

recognition of Plantagenet as Duke of York. The thinly-disguised ambition and rancor of all the participants in the wrangle which appears to end on such a healing note is obvious to the discerning eye of Exeter and to the audience. Warwick had proposed acceptance of Plantagenet, Gloucester had enthusiastically agreed, alluding to former times when he had urged such a course on the King, and Winchester, perhaps sensing a future ally, had concurred with the rest. The King, characteristically generous and gracious, had asked simply that Richard be "true." Only Somerset, and he covertly, had opposed the act. But Exeter--and the audience--can see how things really stand. From this time on the struggle within the kingdom will be larger than that already seen so fully depicted: Protector versus Cardinal. This redoubtable pair will continue their wrangle to the death of both, but unbeknownst to them, new forces are already at work.¹⁸ Exeter is indeed correct in his foreboding view of this turn of events.

The play next turns to France in a succession of somewhat disjointed episodes that, in comparison with the more integrated action of the later histories, gives justification to the charge that 1 Henry VI lacks careful structure.

¹⁸ Baldwin, Literary Genetics, pp. 356-57, points out the merger of the Protector-Cardinal conflict into the Lancaster-York conflict at this point in the action. Talbert, Elizabethan Drama, pp. 173-74, sees the combination of new faction with old as an example of the cyclical repetition which he regards as characteristic of the structure of 1 Henry VI.

Pucelle steals into Rouen and retakes it for the French, only to lose it back to the mighty Talbot despite the cowardice of Sir John Fastolfe. The dying Bedford watches from a chair (III.ii). Then, the forces of Talbot marching off to Paris, Pucelle conceives the idea of enticing Burgundy from the English side back to the French. Her aside when it is done, besides no doubt furnishing a laugh in the Elizabethan theater, is an appropriate comment on the attitude toward the French shown throughout this intensely patriotic play, "Done like a Frenchman. Turn and turn again!" The last scene of the act (III.iv) picks up the King and his court from the first scene of the act, where in Parliament, following the third Gloucester-Winchester broil, a deceptive peace was established and Plantagenet was made Duke of York. As promised there, Henry is now in Paris to be crowned. In a link with the Talbot thread of action in the French war, Henry holds an audience for the old warrior, giving him high praise and conferring on him the Earldom of Shrewsbury. Immediately after this brief episode a reminder of the central theme of both play and tetralogy is presented in an outburst between Vernon and Bassett, adherents of York and Somerset, respectively, which bickering continues into IV.i, set in a hall of state in Paris.

The diminishing role that the Gloucester-Winchester enmity is to have for the remainder of this play and the increasing role of partisans of red or white rose is indicated

in IV.i by the fact that, although the original dissentients begin the action by Winchester's placing the crown upon Henry's head at Gloucester's formal direction, the Bishop speaks not another word and Gloucester turns to the somewhat perfunctory role of functionary to the King, directing the Governor of Paris in his oath to Henry, reading aloud the letter of Burgundy's defection delivered by the cowardly Fastolfe, and, after a renewal of the altercation between Vernon of the York faction and Bassett of the Somerset which had ended the previous scene and act, chiding the two for their public strife before the King. The temporary abandonment of the Gloucester-Winchester dissension and the augmentation of the York-Somerset conflict is further indicated by the King's putting on a red rose, with the disclaimer of any favor toward either of his kinsmen. To demonstrate his impartiality--and his lack of political acumen--he makes York Regent of France, Bedford having died, and directs Somerset to join his cavalry with York's foot in prosecution of the war. It remains for Exeter as chorus again to point the danger:

But howsoe'er, no simple man that sees
 This jarring discord of nobility,
 This shouldering of each other in the Court,
 This factious bandying of their favorites,
 But that it doth presage some ill event.
 'Tis much when scepters are in children's hands,
 But more when envy breeds unkind division;
 There comes the ruin, there begins confusion.

(IV.i.187-94)

The "unkind division" is beginning openly to take a new turn; the "ruin" that will come is the ultimate cease of

majesty in the loss of France and the disastrous wars of Lancaster and York.

Exeter's lament is not long in being brought partially to proof, for succeeding scenes of Act IV (ii through vii) show Talbot's efforts at Bordeaux ruined by the failure of York and Somerset, the new and more dangerous faction of the land, to furnish aid. Each blames the other, but the result for England is loss of the last active champion of the spirit of Henry V, Talbot, who, despite Sir William Lucy's magnification of his titles and praise of his valor, lies stinking and flyblown on alien soil, as gleefully pointed out by the Maid of Orleans. Subsequent action will see Pucelle get her just deserts, but the might of Henry V in France and the hopes of his successor for a continuation of that might through the likes of Talbot will, because of faction, dribble into an uneasy and dishonorable French peace and, for the King, loss of the crown and finally death at the hands of Richard Crookback. All of this is forwarded in V.i, where Gloucester reads letters to the King urging peace and proposing marriage between Henry and the daughter of the Earl of Armagnac. The earlier dissension between Gloucester and Cardinal Beaufort is now strangely silent, although Shakespeare handles Winchester in such a way as to show that his ambitions are still very much alive. While Henry laments, yet acquiesces in, the marriage plans being made for him, Winchester enters in a cardinal's habit with a legate and two ambassadors. Shakespeare has Exeter point

the meaning for the audience:

What! Is my Lord of Winchester installed
 And called unto a cardinal's degree?
 Then I perceive that will be verified
 Henry the Fifth did sometime prophesy:
 'If once he come to be a cardinal,
 He'll make his cap coequal with the crown.'
 (V.i.28-33)

Several problems are suggested by Winchester's entrance and the action here. One is Exeter's surprise at seeing Winchester in a cardinal's habit. Gloucester, in the second confrontation, had made clear reference to Winchester as Cardinal, as had Woodville, Lieutenant of the Tower: "Have patience, noble Duke. I may not open./ The Cardinal of Winchester forbids" (I.iii.18-19). In the interval between then and Exeter's surprise here at the beginning of the fifth act, Winchester is consistently addressed and referred to as Bishop of Winchester, not as cardinal. Perhaps Shakespeare did not regard the matter as important. But it is pointed to in a dramatic and significant way in Exeter's comments, and these are reinforced by Winchester's giving the legate

The sum of money which I promised
 Should be delivered to His Holiness,
 For clothing me in these grave ornaments.
 (11.52-54)

Winchester has obviously schemed and worked hard for his red hat. Another reinforcement of the changed state of the Cardinal, which gives him renewed hope in his struggle with the Protector, is pointed up in his aside (much like the soliloquy of I.i) with which he ends this scene:

Now Winchester will not submit, I trow,
 Or be inferior to the proudest peer.
 Humphrey of Gloucester, thou shalt well perceive
 That neither in birth or for authority
 The Bishop will be overborne by thee.
 I'll either make thee stoop and bend thy knee,
 Or sack this country with a mutiny.
 (V.i.56-62)

Shakespeare is thus careful to keep the old animosity going, and he likewise reiterates a theme that has been insisted upon from the beginning: that the nobles of England place their own ambitions above the welfare of the state. Winchester's willingness to raise a mutiny--that most abhorrent of Elizabethan political crimes--if he does not get his way with Gloucester forcefully makes the point. Further, since the audience has just seen England's sole military champion, Talbot, dead as a result of jealousy and faintheartedness among the fractious peers, particularly Somerset and York, the mission of peace upon which Henry sends the Cardinal is calculated to besmirch him in patriotic English eyes. Although Beaufort is a prince of the church, here he is acting in a purely political capacity and in such a manner as to add to England's disgrace.¹⁹

The next appearance of Beaufort occurs three scenes later (V.iv), where he delivers the terms of peace to York

¹⁹Paul A. Jorgensen, Shakespeare's Military World, (Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1956), pp. 174-75, notes that treaties of peace are almost always presented as either deceptive or humiliating in Shakespeare's plays, and instances this one among others. The general reason behind this phenomenon, he conjectures, may be England's recent experience with Spain. Also, since war frequently has both a dramatic and patriotic function (as is certainly true of this play), one might expect treaties to be presented unsympathetically or cynically.

and Warwick for them to present in turn to Charles and the French forces. In the interim between the Cardinal's departure on his mission and arrival at the field of negotiation, interesting events have occurred. La Pucelle, deserted by her attendant demons, has been captured by York; and, in significant juxtaposition, Suffolk has captured Margaret, been smitten by her, and has persuaded her father Reignier to allow him to offer her as bride to King Henry. The York-Pucelle action continues in V.i with Pucelle's disgraceful lying in a desperate attempt to save herself. York, as captor and taunter, assumes the role of the English patriot both here and in his attitude toward the peace terms after the appearance of the Cardinal. Beaufort's entrance as a piece of stage business is designed to speak louder than the pious sentiments he is about to utter.²⁰ As Pucelle leaves the stage, York shouts after her,

Break thou in pieces and consume to ashes,
Thou foul accursed minister of Hell!
(V.iv.92-93)

--and in comes the Cardinal. His role of Churchman as international diplomat, a role that points toward Cardinal Pandulph in King John later, is colored by the imagery of York's lines. Except for his dramatic entrance, however, Shakespeare makes little of the Cardinal in this scene: the terms of peace are presented, Charles's advisors Reignier and Alençon advise the French king to accept them for now and to break them at any opportune time, and York, who had

²⁰Cutts, The Shattered Glass, pp. 112-13.

previously denounced the treaty, fearing that it would mean the loss of all English power in France, concurs. The Cardinal as peace-bringer, offering an inconclusive treaty to France, has as passive a role here as does England.

But other complications are afoot. The last scene of the play brings together with the King two of the four principals who had appeared in the opening scene, Gloucester and Exeter. (Of the others, Bedford has died futilely in France and the Cardinal is elsewhere, probably being entertained by the French.) A new turn in the internal strife of the kingdom is taking place: Henry is persuaded by the self-seeking and unscrupulous Suffolk to disavow his betrothal to the daughter of the Earl of Armagnac and to accept instead the dowerless Margaret. The weak king, who had been reluctant to marry at all when marriage was first proposed, is easily swayed by Suffolk's descriptions of Margaret's beauty, and against the counsel of the Protector, dispatches Suffolk to Anjou to bring the new queen to England. Thus a new "rising figure"²¹ is shown in Suffolk, who will provide a link to the future, in this case the action of the next play. Like almost all the other nobles of England, he is thinking only of personal power:

Margaret shall now be Queen, and rule the King;
But I will rule both her, the King, and realm.
(V.v.107-08)

²¹Talbert's term in Elizabethan Drama, p. 174. He points out that each play in the First Tetralogy ends with an ascendent character: Suffolk in 1 Henry VI, York in 2, Richard of Gloucester in 3, and Richmond in Richard III.

The survey of the main conflicts and lines of action thus concluded in 1 Henry VI has attempted to analyze particularly the role of Henry Cardinal Beaufort. He is a major character. Numerous others play as important a role: the King as both symbol of the suffering state and as cause, through his ineptness, of much of its suffering;²² the heroic Talbot, who dies in vain on the fields of France, and his chief adversary, Joan La Pucelle; Richard Plantagenet, who along with Somerset begins a new turn in the civil strife about midway in the play; the rising Suffolk at the end; and all along the Protector, Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, who finds himself continually at odds with Beaufort.²³ Beaufort thus provides through the first half of the play a powerful example in his struggle with Gloucester of the kind of civil discord that will lose France and weaken the state at home. After Plantagenet is created Duke of York, the role of the Cardinal is muted in the internal broils, but he

²²Cutts, The Shattered Glass, p. 119, points out that Talbot as soldier, Gloucester as statesman, and Beaufort as priest, had had their functions united gloriously in Henry V, who was all of these or what they were supposed to stand for. Henry VI is a sad contrast.

²³Duke Humphrey apparently captured the Elizabethan imagination. Gerald Eades Bentley, The Jacobean and Caroline Stage (1945; rpt. from corr. sheets of first ed., Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), V, 1323, cites a Stationer's Register entry of 29 June, 1660, by Humphrey Moseley, which included the title, among others, "Duke Humphrey, A Tragedy by Will: Shakspeare." Moreover, appearing in Warburton's list of manuscript plays is "Duke Humphrey Will. Shakespear." Bentley comments; "It is quite unlikely that Shakespeare wrote the tragedy of Duke Humphrey, for no other evidence to the title has been found. I know of no evidence as to the date or authorship of the manuscript Mosely had in 1660."

remains on the scene and continues to figure in the total pattern of the play as a dissentient and example of the major reason why Henry of Windsor will lose all that Henry of Monmouth gained. As an heir, along with Gloucester, Exeter, and Bedford, of the glory of the reign of Henry V, Beaufort most of all fails the young King; and as dramatic example and explanation of why neither King nor nobility is able to continue England's prosperity either at home or abroad, Beaufort is preeminent in this first play of the First Tetralogy. He will continue his divisive tactics and dramatic function into the next play of the series, 2 Henry VI.

2 Henry VI

The sickness of England and the incipient threats to her welfare foreshadowed in the opening scene of 1 Henry VI by the black hangings and the laments over the dead Henry V, reinforced by immediate wrangling between Gloucester and Winchester, confirmed by bad news from France, and projected further by Winchester's stated intent to "sit at chiefest stern of public weal" are paralleled in the opening situation of 2 Henry VI. The infatuated King is oblivious to everything save the new Queen; but to the audience and to those nobles on stage who have England's good at heart, the French marriage and French peace are recognized as disastrous. This fact is shown through symbolic action in Gloucester's reading aloud the treaty terms. When he reaches the item stipulating that Anjou and Maine shall be ceded to Reignier, the dowerless Margaret's father, he lets the paper fall--and who should pick it up and continue reading but Gloucester's ancient adversary, Cardinal Beaufort? Thus Shakespeare introduces the Queen who will become known as "she-wolf of France," enforces the sad fact of England's moribund influence abroad, and dramatizes the fundamental differences between Protector and Cardinal, the former having opposed the marriage and supported the French campaign, the latter having tacitly approved the marriage and ignored

the war in his private pursuits.

Nor, to continue the parallel, must the audience wait long for the enmity between Gloucester and Beaufort to break out again in hot words. As in the first scene of the previous play, where the jar between Protector and Bishop began with Gloucester's objection to the hypocritical pretension of Beaufort that the church's prayers had been the cause of Henry V's success, so here the outbreak occurs when Beaufort adopts a divine-rightist stand and submission to royalty he does not practice, chiding on that basis Duke Humphrey's attack on the treaty ceding Anjou and Maine to Reignier and on Henry's marriage:

My Lord of Gloucester, now ye grow too hot.
It was the pleasure of my Lord the King.
(I.i.137-38)

Duke Humphrey clearly is being baited by a man who wishes to procure his fall, and he will not tamely submit to it. After lashing out at the Cardinal, Humphrey stalks out--but not before placing himself in the audience's eye on the side of English patriotism:

Lordings, farewell, and say, when I am gone,
I prophesied France will be lost ere long.
(I.i.145-46)

The Cardinal has recruited another ally besides Somerset in his campaign to strip Henry of Humphrey's protection, the Duke of Buckingham. After Humphrey exits the three agree to enlist Suffolk, a new power in the kingdom, in their plot, and the Cardinal hurries off to speak to him about it. The two "allies" in a few words to each other show that only

personal ambition is their motive; they will stand with Beaufort only so long as it suits their purposes. After they exit Salisbury, Warwick, and York are left on the stage. Salisbury assumes the role of choric commentator that Exeter had performed in 1 Henry VI. Although Salisbury and Warwick will soon be drawn into the Yorkist faction and thus become opponents of the Lancastrian Henry and of Gloucester as Protector, Salisbury here sees the situation truly and enunciates it for the audience in reference to the exit of Beaufort followed by Somerset and Buckingham: "Pride went before; ambition follows him" (I.i.180). He goes on to praise Humphrey and disparage Beaufort, stating his own resolve to continue cherishing Duke Humphrey as champion of the public good and asking the support of his son Warwick and of York in it. As he and Warwick leave the stage, York remains alone to give a long soliloquy on his hopes for the crown, saying that he will make a show of love to Humphrey only so long as it serves his ambitions. Thus the chief motive of this play, the ambition of York, is pointed clearly and a line of action from the previous play, the struggle between Protector and Cardinal, is reintroduced as a part of that larger conflict. The growing Lancaster-York struggle will number both Humphrey and his adversary Beaufort among its victims ere it break into open warfare.²⁴

²⁴ York's soliloquy shows the difficulty of making clear-cut moral distinctions among the characters. Talbert, Elizabethan Drama, p. 190, who believes that Right and Wrong (his terms) are being distinguished clearly for the audience in this scene, in the manner of a morality play grouping, never-

One of the most surprising complications of I.ii to Elizabethan playgoers unfamiliar with the chronicles, with such plays as the lost Duke Humphrey, or with ballads and stories surviving from the War of the Roses must have been the revelation of ambition nothing short of treason in Dame Eleanor, wife to the Protector. True, Cardinal Beaufort in 1 Henry VI had accused Duke Humphrey of being more in awe of his wife than of God or holy churchmen, but there was more than a hint of self-interest in his charge. Though the earlier charge against Gloucester was false, Lady Eleanor is now shown to have succumbed to wicked and unlawful aspirations, for she counters Humphrey's dream which he relates to her of the Cardinal breaking the Protector's staff of office and placing the heads of Suffolk and Somerset on the ends with a dream of her own--a waking dream,

theless admits some difficulty: "Although York's expression of his secret motives qualifies the alignment that has been effected, Right (Gloucester, Salisbury, Warwick, and York) is differentiated from Wrong (Suffolk, Winchester, Somerset, and Buckingham) before York's soliloquy is heard." Baldwin, Literary Genetics, pp. 359-62, analyzing the scene, fixes its chief function as allowing all factions to declare their attitudes toward the crown. Michael Quinn, "Providence in Shakespeare's Yorkist Plays," Shakespeare Quarterly, 10 (1959), 48, reads as the basic cause of the new alignments the advent of Margaret, ". . . bringing into temporary harmony three disruptive vices, the pride of Suffolk, the envy of Winchester, and the ambition of York. . . ." Sen Gupta, p. 24, characteristically resists the placing of too much political emphasis on the clash of rival personalities, maintaining that dramatic effectiveness is served by such clashes without one's attempting to interpret them as part of a unified political theme. In this particular scene he seems to be more nearly correct than the other commentators; the alignments created by momentary agreement of purpose are perhaps best enjoyed for themselves alone, although they certainly add up in their very existence to one of the main themes of both play and tetralogy, the evils of civil discord.

since she says "methought"--of herself seated on the throne in Westminster and King Henry and Queen Margaret kneeling before her and crowning her. Eleanor should have remembered that not only Caesar but also Caesar's wife must be above reproach. Gloucester is not Caesar--but Lady Eleanor, wishing him to be, is playing directly into the Cardinal and Suffolk's hands. The priest John Hume explains how in his Machiavellian soliloquy that closes the scene: he has been employed by Gloucester's enemies to play upon Eleanor's ambitions and thus bring about her husband's fall. The tactic to be employed is to involve Eleanor in witchcraft. A conjuring ceremony has been arranged for the foolish Duchess so that she, like Macbeth, may "know" the future.

In the episodic arrangement of the action of this play the conjuring complication announced in Hume's soliloquy is dropped for a time and other action demonstrates the dangerous situation of the commonwealth, with a King who will not rule and a power struggle going on among the great men of the realm. The several episodes of I.iii can all be tied to the main lines of complication already introduced in the play: the growing ambition and power of York and the attempt by all factions to discredit Gloucester and remove him from his office as Protector. Both of these are combined in the episode of several petitioners which opens the scene. The first petitioner makes a mistake of ironic significance in view of King Henry's passivity, Gloucester's office, and Suffolk's growing influence by mistaking Suffolk for the

Protector and presenting him with a petition against a man of the Cardinal's who, he says, is keeping his house, his lands, and his wife from him. The sympathetic hearing he might have expected from Gloucester is not forthcoming from the man who had earlier announced that he expected through Margaret to rule both King and realm. The second petitioner likewise receives no favor from Suffolk, since the petition is directed against the Duke himself for enclosing the commons of the township of Melford.²⁵ The petition of Peter the armorer's man excites quick, interested response by Suffolk and Margaret, however, for it charges Horner, Peter's master, with treason in saying that the Duke of York was rightful heir to the crown. Queen and paramour see the accusation as an opportunity to enhance their power in the kingdom. Abruptly dismissing all petitioners except Peter, whom they can use to their own advantage, they go into conference to assess their strength and measure that of their enemies. They have many. As Margaret bitterly observes:

Beside the haughty Protector, have we Beaufort
The imperious churchman, Somerset, Buckingham,
And grumbling York; and not the least of these
But can do more in England than the King.

(I.iii.71-74)

Suffolk agrees, adding Salisbury and Warwick to the list. Margaret continues her catalogue of complaints, stating her deep antipathy for Dame Eleanor--and is given comfort in

²⁵The enclosure issue was one of the most lively domestic controversies of Elizabeth's reign, and Shakespeare was to be personally involved in an enclosure attempt in Stratford which appears analogous to that of Suffolk in Melford. See Halliday, pp. 276-80.

Suffolk's promise soon to remove that annoyance:

Madam, myself have limed a bush for her,
And placed a choir of such enticing birds
That she will light to listen to the lays
And never mount to trouble you again.²⁶

Suffolk and Margaret, like the plotters against Gloucester in I.i, are willing to use anyone they can, even their enemies, to attain immediate goals. As Suffolk says,

Although we fancy not the Cardinal
Yet must we join with him and with the lords
Till we have brought Duke Humphrey in disgrace.
As for the Duke of York, this late complaint
Will make but little for his benefit.
So, one by one, we'll weed them all at last,
Till you yourself shall steer the happy helm.
(I.iii.97-103)

The metaphors are mixed but the intention is clear--Duke Humphrey will be taken from Henry's council soon. He has no support anywhere.

The timing of the two conspirators is perfect, for the question of the regency of France, now up for discussion, gives them the opening against Duke Humphrey they have been seeking. The King, characteristically, is noncommittal. Salisbury and Warwick support York; Buckingham, Somerset. The proud and haughty Cardinal, temporarily leagued with Somerset and Buckingham in the plot against Gloucester, cannot resist a thrust at York's supporter Warwick, even

²⁶ Cutts, The Shattered Glass, pp. 116-17, notes the imagery of limed bushes being used in Eleanor's warning to Gloucester about York's and Beaufort's intentions toward him (II.iv.54) and in Beaufort's seeing on his deathbed the ghost of Gloucester with his hair standing upright (as he was found in death), "Like lime twigs set to catch my winged soul," as the Cardinal says (III.iii.16). Shakespeare was obviously fond of the image and uses it justly here, especially in the extended metaphor of the four lines quoted.

though York also is a part of the Cardinal's conspiracy against Gloucester. He calls Warwick down for speaking before his betters. The Queen asserts that the King (who has expressed no such preference) prefers Somerset. At this, Gloucester, who has remained silent, rebukes Margaret for intervening in state matters--and the conspirators see their opportunity in the one purpose they all hold in common. Suffolk demands that Gloucester resign as Protector. The others leap in with accusations: the Cardinal charges plunder of both commons and the church; Somerset, illegal use of public funds for personal ostentation; Buckingham, cruelty in punishing lawbreakers; and the Queen, sale of offices and towns in France. The well-intentioned but hot-tempered Protector, assailed from all sides, abruptly leaves the room to walk off his anger. Had he remained to see his wife baited by Margaret,²⁷ he could not have been so calm as he is when he returns to give his opinion in favor of York as regent of France. But here the Horner-Peter affair comes back on to breed suspicion of York in the fairminded Duke; he thereupon reverses his previous stand and declares for Somerset--leaving York to continue his plotting against both Protector and crown. Gloucester, as usual, is alone in having the interest of the country at heart. Now he is alone in strength.

This scene thus furthers the Cardinal-Gloucester strife

²⁷Burckhardt, p. 101, sees this quarrel between Margaret and Eleanor as analogous to the Temple Garden one in that it is a cause rather than having one. It pushes England into full and open civil war in which the last "Lord Protector" is gone.

that had continued from the first play of the series into the second, showing it now broadened into a conspiracy against Humphrey among practically all the nobles of the play. It highlights York's ambitions in the charge of Peter against his master Horner, although the ironic end of that action is deferred until another scene. It continues an old theme, that internal bickering, ambition, and reckless pursuit of private ends to the neglect of the welfare of the realm is sapping English strength and the stability of the state. Finally, it shows that the one person of any force who does hold Respublica first stands isolated among enemies. He is about to be attacked through the weakest chink in his armor, his foolish wife.

The action that will accomplish Humphrey's fall through Dame Eleanor, promised in the two previous scenes, finally comes about in I.iv. The priest Hume, who at the close of I.ii had announced an impending meeting between Eleanor and "the witch," now brings in his crew: Margaret Jourdain, apparently the witch alluded to, Roger Bolingbroke, a conjurer, and John Southwell, a fellow priest.²⁸ As Dame Eleanor and Hume watch from the gallery the conjurers raise a spirit which gives riddling answers to questions concerning the fates of the King, Suffolk, and Somerset. Just as the

²⁸The best historical study of the episode that I have seen is in George W. Keeton, Shakespeare's Legal and Political Background (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967), pp. 165-71. The play clearly shows Hume to be a priest but is ambiguous about Bolingbroke and Southwell. Actually, all three of the males were priests.

spirit is dismissed, York and Buckingham burst in and arrest the entire group. The grounds for Gloucester's removal from the Protectorship, his arrest and "safe-keeping" by the Cardinal and Suffolk, and his eventual murder are now assured.

Hume in his soliloquy at the end of I.ii had named only the Cardinal and Suffolk as his employers, yet it is York and Buckingham who now surprise and arrest Eleanor. Of course, the Cardinal, Somerset, and York had previously agreed to destroy Gloucester by any means they could, and the Cardinal had hurried to Suffolk to enlist his support (II.i). Buckingham had later informed the Cardinal that he would watch Eleanor closely (I.iii.151). One may conclude from all this, and from York's gleeful remark that Lady Eleanor was watched "at an inch," that all four were involved; and knowing Suffolk's intimacy with Margaret, and having seen him reveal the plot to her, one may also suppose that she had a hand in the affair. Still, critical opinion is not unanimous on just who was involved in the entrapment or what Shakespeare's motives were in changes from the sources.²⁹ Robert Stevenson thinks that the handling of Hume is just one more instance of what he insists is Shakespeare's anticlericalism, that Shakespeare deliberately blackened him by having him

²⁹ Boswell-Stone, p. 259: "Margerie Iordeine was burnt in Smithfield, and Roger Bolingbrooke was drawne to Tiborn, and hanged and quartered; taking vpon his death that there was neuer anie such thing by them imagined. Iohn Hun had his pardon,* and Southwell died in the Tower the night before his execution. . . ." *(n.) "This fact . . . may account for the dramatic Hume having been represented as a traitor Fab. (b 14) says that Hume was the duchess' chaplain."

suborned by Winchester and in showing him to be executed when he was in fact pardoned.³⁰ Quinn likewise notes the unhistorical employment of Hume as agent provocateur by York and the Cardinal, but attributes it to Shakespeare's wish to link this first step in the causal sequence of Gloucester's fall with the Queen-Cardinal-York plot, a link which is reinforced by the unhistorical depiction of the Queen Margaret-Dame Eleanor antipathy.³¹ Keeton has no objection to the selection and presentation of the conjuring data on historical grounds but questions their dramatic employment:

. . . the important point is that in throwing them [historical data] into dramatic form the dramatists have made the episode appear remote from reality, and there has been no corresponding gain in dramatic truth. They have only to be compared with Macbeth for their feebleness to be realized.³²

This is a more serious charge than pointing out minor changes from the chronicles. Perhaps it is acceptable if the conjuring scene is indeed compared with those in Macbeth. But that is setting a high standard of expected achievement for a beginning dramatist, as Shakespeare was, or even for several dramatists of the early 1590's in collaboration; and it seems no discredit to the play that the conjuring scene does not have the force of those of Macbeth or even of Doctor Faustus. Cutts objects to York's repeating the prophecies from the

³⁰Robert Stevenson, Shakespeare's Religious Frontier (The Hague: Martinus Nejhoff, 1958), p. 27. Stevenson regards all of Shakespeare's clerics as being unsympathetically presented, Beaufort more so than the others.

³¹Quinn, p. 48.

³²Keeton, p. 166.

paper where they were written down after being uttered, saying that this seems to be unnecessary repetition.³³ In IV.i, Suffolk is executed by Walter Whitmore, and in V.ii, Richard of Gloucester kills Somerset under the sign of the Castle Inn. In both cases Shakespeare has the principals recognize that the prophecy is being borne out, although Suffolk attributes it to a different source, perhaps as a part of his attempt to persuade his captors to let him live. From Suffolk's viewpoint Walter Whitmore is determined enough already without being led to believe that he is an instrument of fore-ordained fate. The conjuring scene and the subsequent working out of its prophecies is one of the striking episodes of the play. Moreover, it provides the basis for Duke Humphrey's fall, an important event in the deteriorating fortunes of the kingdom.

While the conjuring scene and arrest are taking place Gloucester and the Cardinal are accompanying King, Queen, and the now ubiquitous Suffolk on a falconry hunt at St. Alban's, at the end of the play to be the site of York's first military victory over the Lancastrians, but in this scene (II.i) the site of a deceptive triumph for the Protector, still being badgered by Beaufort and eager to maintain himself the wise counsellor of the King. As the party rides along, the long-smouldering enmity between Cardinal and Protector again breaks out into heated charges and countercharges, as usual

³³Cutts, The Shattered Glass, p. 117. The play is careful to show later that the prophecies are true, although in an unexpected way.

taking the form of the Cardinal's accusing Gloucester of designs on the crown and Gloucester's replying with barbs about Beaufort's unpriestly conduct. And, again as usual, the King is unhappy and laments the discord among his court in lines containing characteristic images for dissension, unrest, and disorder.³⁴ The Cardinal goes further than ever before in his taunts and is met by Gloucester half-way at least, as the two exchange insults and finally physical challenges under cover of the action, agreeing to meet that evening with two-handed swords--the Cardinal's choice--for personal combat. Gloucester is soon to learn of his betrayal by his wife's unlawful ambition, but here he is still maintaining himself against the Cardinal and, as Shakespeare takes pains to show in the "miracle" episode, against any imposture or distortion of truth. The Simpcox episode of this scene is one of the few touches of humor and produces one of the rare cases of good feeling by those about him allowed the beleaguered Duke. The chief purpose of the humor, since it arises from Shakespeare's making the beggar lame as well as blind and thus the object of derision in being made to jump over a stool, seems to be ironic contrast with the sobering news of Dame Eleanor's arrest which follows hard after.³⁵ For a few moments even the Cardinal and Suf-

³⁴The imagery is remarked in M. M. Reese, The Cease of Majesty: A Study of Shakespeare's History Plays (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1961), p. 192.

³⁵Boswell-Stone, pp. 253-54, quotes the earliest account of the sham miracle from Sir Thomas More. More says simply that Simpcox was punished by being set in the stocks;

folk are in an expansive humor over the event, the Cardinal saying, "Duke Humphrey hath done a miracle today" and Suffolk responding, "True; made the lame to leap and fly away" (II.i.155-56). But Duke Humphrey's clear vision is not to save him; Buckingham dashes all his hopes for continuing his standing in the court with news of Eleanor's practicing against the state in the conjuring episode. The Cardinal and the Queen are elated; Henry is troubled--and Gloucester is ruined.³⁶

The rise of the Duke of York, never allowed to be too long absent from the action since it is the subject of this play, is picked up again in II.ii, where York convinces

the invented whipping and stool-jumping was thus a piece of stage business intended to show the shrewdness of Gloucester and to humanize him. Not all critics see Gloucester's skepticism as humorous. Henry Sebastian Bowden, The Religion of Shakespeare (London: Burns and Oates, 1899), p. 213, remarks: "It is noteworthy that the English case of witchcraft should have taken place in the household of the free-thinking Duke of Gloucester, a fact showing that superstition is begotten no less readily from skepticism than from faith."

³⁶The Simpcox episode has not been commented on in much detail. Perhaps it is not worth much comment. Virgil K. Whitaker, Shakespeare's Use of Learning: An Inquiry into the Growth of His Mind and Art (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1953), p. 56, observes (in another context, but applicable here): ". . . his [Shakespeare's] handling of his sources shows clearly that, in his hierarchy of values, fidelity to the main outline of English history as known to his audience came first, then characters that were interesting and consistent with tradition, and finally lively episodes. Fidelity to historical detail had no place in his scheme of historical drama. . . ." The Simpcox episode seems to satisfy all three of the criteria Whitaker proposes. Cutts, The Shattered Glass, p. 115, pursuing his substance-shadow thesis, tries to relate the sham or shadow miracle to the implied real miracle needed to save Henry. He likewise attempts to relate the plea of "pure need" of Simpcox's wife to Eleanor's plea of pure need to protect her and her husband and to gain the crown. His points seem forced.

Salisbury and Warwick of his right through legitimate succession to the crown, and continues into II.iii, where the conjurers and Dame Eleanor are judged and where another judgment, the trial by combat between Horner the armorer and his accuser Peter is given, presumably by God--at least such is King Henry's view. The bearing of the Dame Eleanor judgment episode upon the development of theme and meaning in the play is clear enough: it signifies the victory of the principle of civil war; for through the Duchess will fall the Protector, long-time opponent of such self-seekers as Cardinal Beaufort, Suffolk, and York. Shakespeare takes pains here to show the Duke as an upholder first and last of law:

Eleanor, the law, thou see'st, hath judged thee.
I cannot justify whom the law condemns.
(II.iii.15-16)

The statement sounds cold, but it echoes earlier statements made by the Duke in struggle with the Cardinal and is an accurate expression of all that he has stood for through two plays.³⁷

The second episode of this scene is the ridiculous Horner-Peter affair. A trial by combat, ostensibly to allow God to decide the truth, it is presented as a farce. Horner, who has been accused of asserting York's right to the crown, is so drunk that he is unable to defend himself against the

³⁷Marion A. Taylor, "Lord Cobham and Shakespeare's Duchess of Gloucester," Shakespeare Association Bulletin, 9 (1934), 150-56, marshals evidence to show that the Cobham family exerted influence to have their ancestress shown in a more favorable light than received opinion and Shakespeare showed her. The Cobham family might have taken comfort from the fact that in the play Eleanor's fault only causes Duke Humphrey's forbearance and steady love to shine brighter. The only thing he hated about Dame Eleanor was her faults.

timorous Peter and the latter surprisingly wins. King Henry is tremendously impressed, just as he had been by the St. Alban's fakery before Humphrey exposed it. He fails to act logically on what he professes to believe, however, for if he interprets the outcome as proof of York's pretensions to the throne he fails to say so. And it certainly seems to strain the point to interpret the Peter victory, considering its farcical nature, as a sign of York's legal or moral right, despite the fact that one knows that York is aiming exactly toward what Peter says. To complicate the matter further, Shakespeare makes Peter a foolish figure but not necessarily a knave, as he was in the source.³⁸ The intended meaning of the episode, besides furnishing comic relief and showing the unsettled condition of a kingdom gone topsy-turvy, is probably to be found in regarding it as dramatizing the loss to the kingdom of so clearsighted and patriotic a figure as Duke Humphrey. He has lived by law and reason and has rejected consistently the pious credulity and inaction of King Henry, who will lose his crown and ultimately his life through his saintly but unkingly behavior.³⁹ Unlike

³⁸ Boswell-Stone, pp. 260-61, shows that both Halle and Holinshed depicted Peter as cowardly. Holinshed says that the armorer was slain without guilt and that Peter was soon convicted of a felony and hanged at Tyburn.

³⁹ Cutts, The Shattered Glass, p. 114, draws a parallel between Horner-Gloucester and Peter-Winchester. In each case the "weaker" party wins. He points out Gloucester's original support of York for the French regency and places Gloucester's fall in his having to defer to Suffolk's candidate, Somerset, because of Peter's charges. His parallel seems over-ingenuous but suggests an acceptable broad meaning for the puzzling episode.

Henry, Duke Humphrey is a man of action and he sees clearly.

His--and England's--enemies are to prevail, however. The third act of 2 Henry VI brings the long contention between the Cardinal and Duke Humphrey to a close. As was dramatized in the previous conspiracy episodes, Humphrey stands alone; and now that his wife has been branded a traitor, he is completely vulnerable. His enemies unite firmly against him at the Parliament at Bury St. Edmonds (III.i), to which Duke Humphrey, symbolically, is late. While the King wonders at his not having arrived, the Queen, Suffolk, Cardinal Beaufort, York, and Somerset bring up both new charges and some of the old made earlier (I.iii) of insolence of office, instigation of the Duchess to treason (a new and especially damning charge), devising strange deaths for small offenses (the Cardinal's echo of Buckingham's previous indictment), and diversion of soldiers' pay in France. The badgered King protests Gloucester's worth, but it is obvious that he will be overborne.

At this moment a major line of action reaching back to 1 Henry VI comes to a close with Somerset's news that all is lost in France. The continental territories for which Talbot, Salisbury, and myriads of good Englishmen had been sacrificed are in French hands, and Harry of Windsor has indeed lost all that Harry of Monmouth had gained. All, that is, of the territories abroad--for he has not yet lost the crown of England. He is getting closer to that, however, for when Gloucester arrives at court his confident enemies arrest him.

The King, who had defended him previously, weakly acquiesces:

My lords, what to your wisdoms seemeth best,
Do or undo as if ourself were here.

(I.i.195-96)

If the audience had doubts previously as to what to the conspirators' wisdoms would seem best, the doubts are speedily resolved. As the Cardinal puts it,

That he should die is worthy policy;
But yet we want a color for his death.
'Tis meet he be condemned by course of law.

(III.i.235-37)

The Duke of Suffolk does not scruple on even the latter point, offering to "be his [Humphrey's] priest" if the others will but say the word. Even this much of a delay is too much for Cardinal Beaufort, who would have Duke Humphrey dead even before Suffolk could "take due orders for a priest." The Cardinal, like Hamlet with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, intends to allow no shriving time. Suffolk, Queen Margaret, and York enthusiastically agree, and Duke Humphrey's long contention against the Cardinal and other self-seekers is a lost battle.

Shakespeare in this lengthy scene of 383 lines unites, as he has frequently done before, the themes of the troubles of Humphrey and the rise of York, themes going well back into the action of 1 Henry VI. The fall of Humphrey he emphasizes by having the Cardinal assume responsibilities that had previously belonged to the Protector, in this case designating York as Regent of Ireland upon receipt of news that Ireland is in revolt. The appointment, as York makes clear in his soliloquy ending the scene, opens the way to the crown for

him by providing him troops, which he had lacked. Thus Shakespeare carefully points up the Cardinal's lack of political acumen upon his second major action of state (his first had been in support of the disastrous French treaty and marriage), his blood-thirstiness when Humphrey is finally plucked down, and the simultaneous continuation of York's climb toward the crown. Duke Humphrey had already disapproved York's being made Regent of France; now Gloucester's adversary, in triumph over the Duke, gives York the power he needs to gain the throne.

As the obverse of York's rise, the third act of the play focuses on the falls of three of the principals of the action thus far: Suffolk, Duke Humphrey, and Cardinal Beaufort. Humphrey's fall is the real center of the action, for it is through his fall and subsequent murder that an aroused commons demands Suffolk's banishment; and it is Humphrey's murder that brings the Cardinal to his terrible end in III.iii. As has already been pointed out, III.i shows the entire court, including the Cardinal and Suffolk, attacking Humphrey so viciously and vigorously that the weak King allows his arrest. The next scene shows the fall of Suffolk when news of Humphrey's death, suspected of being murder (as indeed it was), is revealed. The Cardinal figures in this scene in a strange and paradoxical way.

It opens with a brief episode of two murderers reporting the Duke's "dispatch" to Suffolk, who conveys the news to the now-assembled court. Cardinal Beaufort's reaction

is entirely in character with his usual pretense toward piety and his hypocrisy, traits which have stamped his career throughout his long struggle with the Protector:

God's secret judgment. I did dream tonight
The Duke was dumb and could not speak a word.
(III.ii.31-32)

Astonishingly, these are the last words the Cardinal speaks until the death-bed episode of the following scene! He remains on stage for 170 more lines of discussion of the cause of Humphrey's death, a discussion in which he and Suffolk, Humphrey's custodians during his brief arrest, are charged with the Duke's murder. He says not a word, however; all defense is left to Suffolk. One feels that Shakespeare was using the Cardinal's last comment as an example of dramatic irony, matching Duke Humphrey's dumbness with the Cardinal's, who has most need to speak but does not. Certainly the next scene (III.iii) shows "God's secret judgment" on the Cardinal, a reversal of his words about Humphrey.

Shakespeare's compression of time in the three scenes of Act III further points up the speedy retribution given two of the most prominent conspirators. Immediately after the fall of Suffolk, the main business of III.ii, news is brought of the Cardinal's being at point of death. Only 164 lines earlier he had exited after remaining on stage in silence during the attack on him and Suffolk. In III.iii his end comes. And a terrible contrast it presents to the haughty Cardinal who had striven against the Protector to gain power in the kingdom, who had purchased a Cardinal's

hat for ecclesiastical pomp, and who had conspired to murder the Protector when all else failed. In his delirium he sees the dead Humphrey, his hair standing upright (as it had been reported in death), like lime twigs set to catch his soul. The pious king, loath to see his clerical kinsman making such a bad end, seeks for a sign of the Cardinal's hope of bliss. There is none. Warwick, despite the King's forbearing to judge, sets the tone: "So bad a death argues a monstrous life" (III.iii.30). Thus passes from the stage a character who is the most fully developed of all Shakespeare's clerics.⁴⁰ It is appropriate to summarize the various uses to which he has been put in the two plays in which he has figured so prominently, to assess his character and its role in theme and meaning, and to note critical opinion concerning him.

In the lengthy discussion in this paper of the role of the Cardinal in dramatic conflict, the aim has been to demonstrate his importance as dissident, as one of a number of characters who think first and foremost of themselves, their personal ambition, their pride and place--all to the detriment of England's welfare both at home and abroad. In 1 Henry VI Beaufort is a prime example of the civil factionalism and self-seeking that cause the loss of France. In his long struggle with Duke Humphrey he invariably figures as a

⁴⁰The deathbed scene strikes readers differently. William Hazlitt, Characters of Shakespeare's Plays (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, n.d.) p. 141, thought that the account of Beaufort's death was ". . . one of our author's masterpieces." Keeton, p. 306, thinks it melodramatic and a "major absurdity."

divisive force in a kingdom in which the Protector represents virtually the only stability and strength the Crown--and thus the kingdom--possesses. In 2 Henry VI Beaufort continues his divisive function. In the conspiracy with York and Suffolk against Humphrey's life he stands out clearly as the kind of force in the kingdom that will cause the saintly Henry to lose his crown to the more cunning and vigorous Yorkists.

As for the Cardinal's character, there is none of the moral ambiguity that one might read in the portrayal of York or Warwick. From the first Beaufort is shown as greedy for unlawful secular power, venal in his ecclesiastical pursuits, murderous in his jealousy of people who stand in his way, and utterly without moral scruple of any kind. As presented in the two plays, the Cardinal is "unmitigatedly bad."⁴¹

But if Shakespeare's presentation of Beaufort causes little disagreement among critics on the simple basis of accepted moral standards, his purpose in portraying Beaufort as he did enjoys less critical unanimity and presents a more serious critical problem. A major point of contention is whether Shakespeare intended to stress Beaufort's being a cleric, and, if so, whether his being shown to be a bad one has implications in Shakespeare's political, moral, and religious attitudes and beliefs. Robert Stevenson takes the

⁴¹Tillyard, Shakespeare's History Plays, p. 177. Alfred Harbage, As They Liked It: An Essay on Shakespeare and Morality (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), pp. 16-39, makes a convincing argument for the legitimacy of moral response in evaluation of character.

strongest position on the matter, arguing that Shakespeare deliberately blackened Beaufort both as man and prelate in line with what Stevenson sees as a consistent practice throughout all the plays in which clerics appear.⁴² He is joined in his view of Beaufort as a bad priest by John P. Cutts, who suggests that Gloucester is a Christ-parallel, with the Cardinal as Caiphas and the conspirators as the Sanhedrin.⁴³ At the opposite pole from Stevenson is Henry Sebastian Bowden, who in his zeal to demonstrate his belief in Shakespeare's Catholic orthodoxy apologizes for Shakespeare's handling of Beaufort:

If the hierarchy appears discredited in Beaufort, and the clergy in the two conjuring priests, Hume and Southwell, the Catholic religion is respected in Henry, that saintly innocent. . . .⁴⁴

Robert Elliott Fitch reads anticlericalism into the First Tetralogy and King John, but feels that it ". . . seems to evaporate with the second tetralogy, nor do I find any signs of it in the comedies."⁴⁵ The danger in trying to divine Shakespeare's religious attitude in the portrayal of Cardinal Beaufort is, of course, the fact that Shakespeare is using fairly well-defined political, not religious, events from

⁴²See Shakespeare's Religious Frontier, pp. 57-69, in which Stevenson argues that The First Part of the Contention is the source of 2 Henry VI and discusses nine points of difference between Shakespeare's play and the former, which, he believes, tend to derogate the Cardinal.

⁴³The Shattered Glass, p. 116.

⁴⁴The Religion of Shakespeare, p. 171.

⁴⁵Shakespeare: The Perspective of Value, p. 64.

the not-so-remote past to paint a picture of political turmoil to an audience who was aware of its main outlines and the traditional characters of its principals. History gave Shakespeare a proud, avaricious cardinal who opposed the "good Duke," as Humphrey was known in the popular mind,⁴⁶ and the dramatist made the most of it. As S. C. Sen Gupta observes, in the history plays characters have to be handled in broad outline, and the conflict between Cardinal and Protector is subject to much over-simplification and perhaps distortion.⁴⁷ But--and the point is important--neither dramatic conflict nor character is obscure or ambiguous in Shakespeare's handling of the Cardinal.

With the death of Cardinal Beaufort the presentation of clerics among the characters in 2 Henry VI comes to a close. The play now turns to what has always been its main business, the rise of York. In the curious business of the revolt of York's tool, Jack Cade, an incident occurs which illustrates Shakespeare's practice of shaping history to the compact and ordered demands of drama. In IV.iv King Henry, faced with the disorder and bloodshed of Cade's revolt, characteristically thinks of sending a "holy bishop" to entreat the rabble, to keep them within bounds. Historically, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Winchester treated with Cade's rebels, and it is probably this that Shakespeare had in mind in giving Henry the thought of sending a cleric. Winchester

⁴⁶Keeton, p. 304; Boswell-Stone, p. 246.

⁴⁷Shakespeare's Historical Plays, p. 72.

cannot perform that function without seriously changing the structure of the play, however, and it is Buckingham and Clifford who carry the royal pardon to the rabble and leave Cade without followers, to his disgust (IV.viii). Robert Stevenson, to whom I am indebted for the information, views this historic revision as one of a pattern of change and suppression designed to blacken clerics.⁴⁸ A more likely reason is the dramatic one: Winchester's consistent role as a dissident would hardly support such a successful and politically desirable endeavor as the swaying of Cade's rabble, and even more important, would have necessitated a restructuring of the action. Shakespeare knew when to have Winchester die for best effect.

It is a temptation to discover a cleric in the person of the Clerk of Chatham, hanged by Cade's men because he could read and write; but neither Shakespeare nor chronicles support such a reading. T. W. Baldwin points out that the Clerk is probably a product of the petty school curriculum,⁴⁹ and George W. Keeton suggests that the Clerk may have been the victim of the dislike of the illiterate for the practice of excusing crime for benefit of clergy, giving the incident possible political application for Shakespeare's own time.⁵⁰ The facts seem to be that the death of the Cardinal ends the presentation of clerics in 1 and 2 Henry VI.

⁴⁸Shakespeare's Religious Frontier, pp. 8-9.

⁴⁹Literary Genetics, p. 369.

⁵⁰Shakespeare's Legal and Political Background, p. 301.

3 Henry VI

If in 1 and 2 Henry VI a major role is played by a cleric, Cardinal Beaufort, no such dramatic counterpart can be found in the third and fourth plays of the First Tetralogy. In 3 Henry VI only one cleric appears, and in a minor role. He is the tutor to young Edmund, Earl of Rutland and second son of the Duke of York. Historically, the tutor was Rutland's chaplain and schoolmaster, one Robert Aspoll. The incident as narrated by Halle⁵¹ evidently appealed to Shakespeare's imagination, for the drama not only devotes an entire scene to Rutland's murder by Clifford (I.iii) but also makes it more bloody and pathetic, through dramatic dialogue, than does the narrative source. Rutland in the chronicle is unable to speak for fear, but Shakespeare gives fifty-two lines of dialogue to creating his intended effect of love and devotion shown on the part of the tutor, moving pathos in the innocence of young Rutland, and savage ferocity and blood-thirstiness in Clifford. The chaplain, who in Halle's account was standing by when Clifford struck Rutland down, is in Shakespeare's presentation dragged off by soldiers before the murder, but not before he utters a priestly admonition:

⁵¹See Boswell-Stone, pp. 297-98.

Ah, Clifford, murder not this innocent child,
 Lest thou be hated both of God and Man!
 (I.iii.8-9)

Shakespeare thus goes beyond his source in presenting the tutor-cleric in a favorable light, not by alteration of reported action but through dramatic contrast between tutor and avenger.⁵² In truth, Clifford is no gentleman.

⁵²Fitch, p. 73, states, "In general, revenge is abominable only so far as it is savage, excessive, and sadistic." He makes no direct comment on the Clifford-Rutland episode but in a note points to what he sees as one of only two indications in all the plays of the conflict between religious and secular teaching, where in 3 Henry VI, II.i. 160-64, Richard of Gloucester asks,

Shall we throw away our coats of steel,
 And wrap our bodies in black mourning gowns,
 Numbering our Ave Maries with our beads?
 Or shall we on the helmets of our foes
 Tell our devotion with revengeful arms?

The other indication of conflict he points to is in Macbeth, III.i.86-91. These may be the only two direct statements of the conflict, but the tutor's admonition to Clifford certainly implies the moral obloquy that can attach to revenge.

Richard III

In Richard III, the culmination of the First Tetralogy, the unhappy internal broils of York-Lancaster are finally brought to an end with the victory of the Earl of Richmond over the Yorkist forces headed by the cruel and sardonic Richard of Gloucester. Before this happy event can occur, however, England has to suffer her worst tyranny in history. Of all Shakespeare's plays, no other exceeds Richard III in being dominated by a single character. Beside Richard the other characters seem pale. Even King Edward suffers from comparison with Richard's diabolic energy and vitality, and such important characters, both historically and dramatically, as the Duke of Clarence, the Duke of Buckingham, and Lord Hastings are shown as mere pawns of the Machiavellian Richard. In such a play it is not surprising that no clerical figure stands out very clearly from the host of characters that serve as the protagonist's tools, opponents, or victims. But if Richard III lacks a clerical character of the dramatic force of Cardinal Beaufort, it nevertheless employs clerics in diverse and occasionally complex functions. The clerics in Richard III include five speaking parts: Cardinal Bourchier, Archbishop of Canterbury; Thomas Rotherham, Archbishop of York; John Morton, Bishop of Ely; and two priests, one generally thought to be the historical

Christopher Urswick and the other unnamed. In addition there is a dramatically significant use of silent clerics in the action--Richard's appearing on a balcony between two bishops--and several references to clerics who do not appear on stage. Clerics therefore have greater variety of function than seen thus far in dissentient Cardinal, conjuring priests, and valiant tutor of the Henry the Sixth plays.

The first appearance of a cleric in Richard III occurs in II.iv in the person of the Archbishop of York. He is shown in the company of the just-widowed Queen Elizabeth; the Duchess of York, Queen Elizabeth's mother-in-law; and the young Duke of York, the deceased King Edward's younger son. The older son, who by established theory of succession is de facto king, is reported as on his way to court. The conversation is first of him, but soon switches ominously to Richard of Gloucester, dwelling symbolically on his rapid growth during his youth and on his being born toothed. The scene goes on to demonstrate his full bite now, for a messenger enters with news that Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan, the former two brother and son, respectively, to Queen Elizabeth, have been committed to the Tower by order of the mighty Dukes of Gloucester and Buckingham. Queen Elizabeth is properly fearful for her house at this barefaced assertion of Richard's power. The Archbishop of York thereupon offers sanctuary to the troubled Queen and young Prince and further offers to give the Great Seal to the Queen. Thus, the play

follows its source⁵³ in showing Rotherham's sympathy toward the party of the Queen and the young princes. As Lord Chancellor the Archbishop should logically be expected to have weight in affairs of state; in actuality, as the play is to demonstrate, anyone who opposes Richard will be swept aside. Although the play does not show Rotherham's fall from office,⁵⁴ his offer of sanctuary will not hold; the younger prince is soon to be lodged in the Tower along with his older brother. The offer of sanctuary by a cleric was intended to be felt as an act in keeping with the office of an Archbishop, I believe, and, despite the fact that the Archbishop's being Lord Chancellor is only alluded to in his offer of the Great Seal to Elizabeth, the offer in this instance serves to align the Church against the machinations of Richard.⁵⁵ Other actions by clerics are less easily subject to such an interpretation. Shakespeare characteristically balances this action with a more equivocal one by another churchman in the succeeding scene (III.i), where Cardinal Bouchier, Archbishop of Canterbury, is persuaded by Buckingham to bring young York out of sanctuary to the court. The dialogue clearly shows the pressure Bouchier is under from Buckingham and Hastings, behind whom stands the Duke of

⁵³See Boswell-Stone, pp. 355-56.

⁵⁴He was soon after removed from the Lord Chancellorship. See Keeton, p. 205.

⁵⁵Stevenson, p. 16, disagrees, pointing out that the chronicle source makes much more of the incident than does Shakespeare and concluding therefore that Shakespeare is allowing Rotherham to appear with reduced dignity.

Gloucester; and the Cardinal quickly succumbs to Buckingham's argument that the young York cannot legally claim sanctuary since he has no need of it:

My Lord, you shall o'errule my mind for once.
Come on, Lord Hastings, will you go with me?
(III.i.57-58)

Wolfgang Clemen characterizes Buckingham's argument as a typical conversion speech with the Cardinal's abrupt capitulation being in accord with convention; on the other hand, he admits that the action may be intended to show weakness of character on the part of the Cardinal, since Buckingham's speech, particularly the artificially rhymed ll. 49-54, reeks of insincerity and deception.⁵⁶ Henry Sebastian Bowden and Robert Stevenson take the latter view.⁵⁷ The problem of dramatic intent is further complicated in that the chronicles are ambiguous about which churchman did what in the sanctuary affair, it being possible that Shakespeare intended only one churchman instead of two.⁵⁸ Reading the action as having involved two churchmen, however, the one offering sanctuary to Queen and sons and the other under pressure using persuasion to cause them to come out, one

⁵⁶ Wolfgang Clemen, A Commentary on Shakespeare's "Richard III," English version by Jean Bonheim (London: Methuen, 1968), pp. 122-23.

⁵⁷ The Religion of Shakespeare, p. 211; Shakespeare's Religious Frontier, p. 16.

⁵⁸ Boswell-Stone, p. 357 (n.). Keeton, p. 205, points to King Edward's being sent to Warwick's brother, the Archbishop of York, in 3 Henry VI, IV.iii, and suggests that it is Elizabeth's remembering her previous safety there that makes her seek sanctuary with the same person in Richard III.

sees Shakespeare in what seems to be a characteristic treatment of all clerics in the First Tetralogy save Cardinal Beaufort: either balancing cleric against cleric and action against action, as in the present instance, or, as he does frequently, presenting the cleric in what might be interpreted as an equivocal moral position--the kind of position in which most of the lay characters are placed in the English history plays.

Another example of the varied uses to which clerics are put in Richard III occurs in the curious business of Hastings' conversation with an unnamed priest at the close of III.ii, after he had been "sounded" by Catesby on his attitude toward the young Prince and found wanting from the standpoint of Richard and his cohorts. The main purpose of the action involving the priest is dramatic irony, giving Buckingham an opportunity to jest with Hastings about the latter's not needing a priest, when in reality both Buckingham and audience know that he does. The point is reinforced in the following scene when, after his fall, Hastings remembers: "Oh now I want the priest that spoke to me" (III.iv. 89). Wolfgang Clemen notes that Hastings' encounter with both Pursuivant and Priest follows the morality-play pattern of symbolic meetings with representatives of various social orders,⁵⁹ and the purpose of the entire scene is obviously

⁵⁹Commentary, p. 133. Stevenson, p. 28, recognizes the purpose of the encounter as furnishing Buckingham with an opportunity for ironic comment on Hastings' fate but reads Hastings' addressing the priest as "Sir John" as employment of a "derogatory nickname." Hastings' pride and insouciance

intended to contrast with Hastings' fall in the next scene. Another possible purpose for the encounter is the suggestion of intrigue in the elliptical conversation and mysterious action of the two. Such an intrigue would fit well in context, for it occurs at the end of a scene in which Stanley warns Hastings that "two councils" are being held, one secret and one open, apparently; and Hastings himself hints darkly that he has secrets of his own: "Ere a fortnight make me elder,/ I'll send some packing that yet think not on it" (III.ii.62-63). Too, there is the later matter of Sir Christopher Urswick and political maneuvering. Still another possible function of the priest is to show that Hastings is making a second bad choice in the scene, the first being his refusal to believe Lord Stanley's warning that "the boar" would soon turn against him. The second wrong choice, read in this way, is Hastings' refusal to repent of his association with Richard and confess to the priest, instead blindly persisting in supposing himself an untouchable favorite of Richard's. Such an interpretation would emphasize the possibility of choice for Hastings, an opportunity to elect flight and safety, repentance and uprightness, rather than to persist in his error, an error clearly shown in the episode of his fall.⁶⁰ There is not enough evidence to state Shake-

toward all concerned in this scene would support this alleged bit of rudeness, but his specific words to the priest otherwise and the obviously intimate relationship do not indicate the lack of courtesy that Stevenson sees.

⁶⁰This point is made by Quinn, p. 51.

speare's intention with certainty, however, beyond the obvious purpose of furnishing Buckingham with the opportunity to indulge in a piece of dramatic irony.

The next piece of action involving a cleric is the Tower scene (III.iv), where Richard makes his preposterous charge of witchcraft against Queen Elizabeth and Jane Shore, using the same occasion to condemn Hastings for treason. Richard the grim comedian and sardonic actor stars in this wonderful depiction of a man in complete control of a situation. The scene opens with the assembled nobles, including the Bishop of Ely, nervously discussing the date of the coronation--nervously and futilely, for no one knows the mind of the Protector. The Bishop of Ely, later in the play to join Richmond and to be recognized by Richard as a formidable foe, is not distinguished in this scene from the other ill-at-ease, even fearful, counsellors. Indeed, Shakespeare uses Ely for a pointer toward the masterful comic grotesqueness of Richard in two amusing ways. First, after the fumbling conversation concerning the coronation, Ely announces the entrance of Richard in such mechanical terms that Shakespeare must have intended it as part of the comedy: "Now in good time here comes the Duke himself" (III.iv.22).⁶¹

Richard at least recognizes the dark comedy of the situation,

⁶¹There are four other employments of this entrance device, with almost identical wording, in the play: II.i.45; III.i.24; III.i.95; IV.i.12. The first two cited here are humorous in context and the third is ironic. The fourth seems humorous to me but might be interpreted otherwise. The frequency and specific employment indicates that Shakespeare was parodying his own useful stage device.

ironically greeting the assembly with the hope that his absence has hindered no great designs on their part.

Shakespeare shortly allows Richard to exhibit his talent for acting and for throwing others off balance in his surprising call for the Bishop of Ely's strawberries:

<u>Glo.</u>	My Lord of Ely!
<u>Ely.</u>	My Lord?
<u>Glo.</u>	When I was last in Holborn, I saw good strawberries in your garden there. I do beseech you send for some of them.
<u>Ely.</u>	Marry, and will, my lord, with all my heart.
<u>Exit.</u>	(III.iv.32-35)

The episode, found in Shakespeare's chronicle source,⁶² is turned in the play toward grim comedy--Richard's histrionics and the relief of the Bishop that he could please rather than offend.⁶³ Hastings, who is striving mightily to please,

⁶²See Boswell-Stone, pp. 371-72.

⁶³Critics see the episode as primarily comedy. See, for example, Mark Van Doren, Shakespeare (1939; rpt. Garden City: Doubleday, Anchor Books), p. 26. But some see other functions as well. Clemen, Commentary, p. 139, notes that it diverts attention from Richard's aside to Buckingham and is a new dramatic technique in that ". . . all that matters happens below the surface and remains unspoken." Keeton, p. 320, sees the incident as a device to excuse Ely from complicity in Hastings' condemnation. This seems to be a strained interpretation in the play (although not the source) since the play shows that Gloucester makes the decision on his own even though he confides in Buckingham. Edward Dowden, Shakespeare: A Critical Study of His Mind and Art (1875; rpt. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967), p. 186, sees the request as Richard's attempt to appear disengaged from sinister thought, but thinks that it really shows Richard's cynical contempt for human life, since he eats the berries only after Hastings' head is off. Sen Gupta, p. 95, sees in the episode an "inexhaustible inventiveness that finds . . . fantastic connexions . . . and a far-flung analogy . . ."--a mature craftsmanship. Ulrici, II, 294-95, is a minority voice in disliking the episode, thinking that it, along with the Lady Anne wooing scene and Clarence's account of his dream, betrays "the young poet." J. Dover Wilson, "A Note on Richard III: The Bishop of Ely's Strawberries," Modern Language

soon sees that when Richard does not choose to be pleased any incident or remark can give him the opportunity to shout out that proverbial tyrant's doom, "Off with his head."

Shakespeare uses two clerics shortly thereafter in a key situation to produce a striking visual effect. Unlike the Bishop of Ely, who spoke--albeit sparsely--in the strawberry scene, this pair speaks not a word. Nor do they need to do so to serve Richard's (and their) dramatic purpose: to aid him in maneuvering the Mayor and citizens of London into offering Richard the crown. Richard sets his scene and selects his props carefully. First he and Buckingham dress in rotten armor, pretending immediate danger to impress the Lord Mayor and citizens with the peril of not having a strong king such as Richard firmly on the throne (III.v). Somebody--Hastings, for example--might be threatening the peace of the realm. When the "traitorous" Hastings' head is brought in the practical Mayor sees exactly where power lies, and Richard is ready to assume another role--piety and humility. He sends Buckingham to spread rumors of his own brother Edward's bastardy and sets up his next act for the Mayor and citizens:

If you thrive well, bring them to Baynard's Castle,
Where you shall find me well accompanied
With reverend fathers and well-learned bishops.
(III.v.98-100)

Review, 52 (1957), 563-64, suggests that Richard, allergic to strawberries, sends for them to produce a broken-out, inflamed (not withered) arm to support his charge of witchcraft.

He then dispatches Lovel to Doctor Shaw and Catesby to Friar Penker in apparent furtherance of his plan to be surrounded at Baynard's with "reverend fathers and well-learned bishops." A little later (III.vii), after all preparations are made, Richard appears aloft between two bishops to entertain the wishes of the citizens concerning the crown.⁶⁴ His sincerity and piety are obvious to all--does he not reprove Buckingham for swearing?--and at length he accedes to the arguments that only he is able to guide England's destiny. Shakespeare takes pains in this scene to show Richard's histrionic artistry. His carefully calculated plans to overawe the Mayor, his staging a tableau of piety and seeming reluctance to leave his study for such worldly vanity as the crown, his reproof of Buckingham for swearing, and his gradual accession to the pleas of a distressed populace are generally admired by critics.⁶⁵ After this climax in the

⁶⁴Modern editions follow the First Folio in this stage direction. The text does not refer to the silent pair specifically as bishops; the Mayor says, "See where he stands between two clergymen!" (III.vii.95). Boswell-Stone, p. 383, points out, ". . . nothing said by More, or any other historical authority, supplied a hint even for the dramatic Richard's refusal of an audience on the ground of preoccupation with 'holy Exercise'! (2) the words 'with a byshop on euery hand of him'--which I have placed between square brackets--were added by Halle or Grafton to More's text." Whitaker, Shakespeare's Use of Learning, p. 55, instances Richard's two bishops as an example of Shakespeare's sharp eye for details since they came from the mere phrase of Halle. Muriel C. Bradbrook, Elizabethan Stage Conditions: A Study of Their Place in the Interpretation of Shakespeare's Plays (1932; Cambridge, Eng.: The University Press, 1968), p. 26, cites the use of the two bishops as one of several examples of "patterned entries and groupings" in Richard III.

⁶⁵See, for example, Peter Alexander, Shakespeare's Life

action, however, Richard's character seems to change, particularly his grotesque vitality and jocularly. As Ernest William Talbert observes (Elizabethan Drama and Shakespeare's Early Plays, p. 231), after the balcony appearance ". . . the manner of Iniquity disappears almost entirely. The noncomical wit of sudden decisions, and almost of improvisation, increases. . . ." ⁶⁶ Arthur Rossiter has shown, however, that Richard's wit and sense of drama in this scene not only win the audience over to the Machiavellian, even Satanic, Richard as hero, but also establish him thematically as the "scourge of God" whom England has to suffer before she can be purged of the curses of civil dissension. ⁶⁷ In such a

and Art (New York: New York University Press, The Gotham Library, 1961), p. 84; Georg M. C. Brandes, William Shakespeare, trans. William Archer, Mary Morison, and Diana White (London: William Heinemann, 1916), pp. 134-35.

⁶⁶ The change is noted by others. Tillyard, Shakespeare's History Plays, p. 214, observes, "There are even signs of strain in the last stage of the process when Richard appears between the two bishops; the verse droops somewhat. After this (and it is here that Richard begins his change of nature) the vitality flags, except in patches, till the great scene when the three queens get together. . . ." Talbert and Tillyard join most critics in thinking the scene important, but it has not been universally considered so. Stopford A. Brooke, On Ten Plays of Shakespeare (1905; rpt. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1961), p. 113, thinks, "Richard between the two bishops, with the prayer-book in his hand, is ridiculous; and the scene drags on without Shakespeare's crispness, clearness, or concentration of thought. It is a worse blot on the play than the scenes between Richard and Lady Anne, between Richard and Elizabeth." Brooke's opinion is definitely minority in these instances, particularly the latter two.

⁶⁷ Arthur Percival Rossiter, Angel with Horns and Other Shakespeare Lectures, ed. Graham Storey (London: Longmans, 1961), pp. 19-20.

case it is entirely appropriate that Richard should have the support of the Church, symbolized by the flanking bishops.

If Richard does indeed enjoy the support--or at least lack of opposition--of the Church through Act III, he soon begins to lose it if one decides such a general matter on the specific allusions to and use of clerics in the last two acts. Catesby brings Richard news that "Ely is fled to Richmond" (IV.iii.46) and that Buckingham is in the field against his former intimate. Richard is more troubled at Ely's opposition than at Buckingham's. Although the play, in its selection and compression of events for dramatic unity and force, does not make the matter clear, Ely had become a confidant of the now-prudent Duke while living in his custody and had escaped to join Richmond before Buckingham himself decided to oppose Richard.⁶⁸ One can applaud the omission of such an interesting but minor detail if it is considered that a dramatic episode which replaced it might be the delicious scene of Buckingham's asking Richard for the previously-promised Earldom of Hereford. Nor is the reader particularly disappointed at learning, along with Richard, that "the haughty prelate/ Bishop of Exeter . . ." (IV.v.502-03) is in arms against the beleaguered King without other detail. It is enough to know that Richard is rapidly losing the hold which he had on awed aristocrats, churchmen, and commons alike and that he is like to come up soon against Richmond, whom Richard has had previous ominous

⁶⁸Boswell-Stone, pp. 393-97.

reports of aplenty:

As I remember, Henry the Sixth
Did prophesy that Richmond should be King
When Richmond was a little peevish boy.
(IV.ii.98-100)

God's judgment on Richard and the restoration of peace and prosperity to the land are not far in the future.

Acts IV and V show Richard's declining fortune in the opposition to him, an opposition in which yet another cleric has a hand. He is Sir Christopher Urswick, employed by the Earl of Derby (known chiefly throughout the play as Lord Stanley) as a messenger between him and Richmond.⁶⁹ Here the intrigue involving a cleric is explicit, whereas Hastings' earlier whispering in the ear of the other priest of the play merely suggested some kind of intrigue. And since Lord Stanley is clearly of the forces of good, although he cannot revolt openly lest Richard execute his son George, Sir Christopher's diplomatic function serves to show further the alignment of the Church against Richard that mention of

⁶⁹Stevenson, p. 27, points out that the "Sir Christopher" of the play is not identified further by surname or vocation and that Theobald was the first to identify him with the chronicle Sir Christopher Urswick, chaplain to the Countess of Richmond, Henry Richmond's mother. He implies doubt that Shakespeare intended him to be recognized as a priest--"But if Sir Christopher is a priest only because Theobald would have him so. . . ." However, if Sir Christopher is intended to be a priest, according to Stevenson he is unique: "Throughout the historical plays Shakespeare in only a single instance would seem to have assigned a priest a somewhat favorable role. A certain Sir Christopher carries messages across enemy lines for Lord Stanley to Henry, Earl of Richmond (later Henry VII), in Richard III, IV, v. Since Richmond symbolizes righteousness a priest who endangers himself for Richmond's sake enlists the audience's immediate sympathy."

the Bishops of Ely and Exeter already had indicated. It is true that Shakespeare fails to develop Ely's opposition and historical role in the play to the extent they are developed in the chronicles. Rather than interpret this as an example of anticlericalism, however--Shakespeare's reluctance to show Morton either clearly or honorifically, as charged in Stevenson, p. 17--a more likely explanation seems to be that Shakespeare's ethical and artistic intention is better served by showing Richard's fall as the result of God's judgment working through many earthly instruments, concentrating on Richmond but paying due attention to Stanley as Richmond's father-in-law and Queen Elizabeth as the wronged sister-in-law of Richard.⁷⁰ As the procession of the spirits of Richard's victims makes clear, it is Richard's bloody career that brings about this fall. The angels themselves will do God's work in keeping Richmond from the "boar's annoy"; and after years of civil dissension and strife, England shall enjoy the Tudor peace.

Richard III, although it has no cleric as a major character, has varied roles and functions for those that do appear. Two clerics are balanced against each other in the sanctuary affair, with Richard--as was standard until his fall--prevailing in getting the princes into his control. Ely is shown first as a ready if perhaps apprehensive servant

⁷⁰Ulrici, II, 292, discusses the effect of Shakespeare's historical revision and compression as making Richard's fall more artistically satisfying than that of the sources.

of the Protector in the strawberry incident; later he joins the opposition, with Exeter, against Richard's tyranny. If at times Richard is able to use clerics to help him to attain wicked ends, as in the crown acceptance scene, where he appears to have the support of the Church, these silent pawns are balanced by Sir Christopher, brave servant of Richard's foes. Clerics thus have useful roles in the conflict, in the development of theme, and in giving moral force to the action. With the exception of Henry VIII, Richard III employs more clerics in more varied functions than does any other Shakespearean play. His next important study of a churchman, Cardinal Pandulph in King John, is to be the most thorough since Cardinal Beaufort; and in the opposition between foreign cardinal and the English crown even more problems of intent, more possible meanings and motives for conduct, will be presented than in the conflict between plotting Beaufort and well-intentioned, patriotic Protector in 1 and 2 Henry VI.

King John

Standing as it does outside the two tetralogies, King John presents problems of authorial intention and attitude that the connected histories are largely exempt from. If, in the First Tetralogy, King Henry had represented considerably less than an English king should in political acumen, firmness of attitude, and ability to act for the good of the realm, the theme--the sorrows of England in internecine intrigue and war--had emerged clearly from the action, with Henry, along with the country, a pitiable victim. In Richard III England's scourge had received just retribution through Richmond as redemptive agent of Providence when the proper moment for retribution and redemption came. But in King John the audience is faced with a central character and a chain of events toward which no such clear feelings can be attached. At first a stout champion of England, John weakly hands over the crown to a foreign emissary; secured on his throne by force if not by legitimate succession, he urges the murder of a young kinsman who poses a threat to that place; faced with an invading foreign army and revolt at home, he is saved by circumstances almost entirely independent of his own exertions; and at last, poisoned by a monk, he dies, leaving a new order to which his chief service has been his departure. Thus, John as king is at best an equivocal figure, simultaneously both betrayer and hero of the realm.

But in this play, as in the First Tetralogy, it is the realm, not the individuals who seek to influence its destiny, that really matters. Wicked king, invading prince, ecclesiastical politician--all must finally be subordinate to the patriotic ideal enunciated by the Bastard which ends the play and strikes its keynote:

This England never did, nor never shall,
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror
But when it first did help to wound itself.
Now these her princes are come home again,
Come the three corners of the world in arms,
And we shall shock them. Naught shall make us rue
If England to itself do rest but true.
(V.vii.112-18)

This, however, is the conclusion of the play; the events preceding it bring England perilously close to lying at the proud foot of France and see her king receiving his crown back from the papal legate after threats of excommunication and interdict have forced his submission to papal authority. That England is saved is a result of forces other than the king.

Whether the play has direct contemporary application other than its patriotism, always a popular Elizabethan theme, is a matter of critical disagreement. A prominent historian of the Elizabethan period believes that the play reflects Shakespeare's reaction to current events in France,⁷¹ and a historical critic connects the problem of regicide in the play with Mary of Scotland,⁷² to cite only two examples.

⁷¹A. L. Rowse, William Shakespeare: A Biography (1964; rpt. New York: Pocket Books, Cardinal Edition, 1965), p. 254.

⁷²Lily B. Campbell, Shakespeare's "Histories": Mirrors

On the other hand, another student of the early plays sees King John as having applicability to Shakespeare's time only in the contrast between the two periods:

Shakespeare's primary concern . . . seems to have been to develop a rush of events . . . of a time that for Elizabethans was long past and never to be desired. In contrast . . . the England of Elizabeth showed no such ruler, no such revolt, no such invasion, no such infection of the times. Indeed, the closing maxim of King John seems designed to solidify such an impression.⁷³

Just how much Shakespeare may have been reflecting concern over such specific political situations as Henri IV's France or Mary of Scotland may be debated, but that he was concerned with questions that had both political and moral relevance can hardly be denied. King John in large part is concerned with an idea treated in the First Tetralogy: the moral and political consequences of rebellion. In the earliest histories rebellion is shown to be a divisive force culminating in the monstrous Richard III. It is true that he in turn is rebelled against, but preceding events and Richmond's speeches, as well as the total context, show that God's hand is at work in the historical pattern of events and that Richmond's "rebellion" is no rebellion at all. As for true rebellion against God's anointed, only a monster such as Richard III would be guilty of it.⁷⁴ In King John and the

of Elizabethan Policy (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1947), p. 164.

⁷³ Talbert, Elizabethan Drama, pp. 284-85.

⁷⁴ John F. Danby, Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature: A Study of "King Lear" (London: Faber and Faber, 1949), pp. 196-97.

Second Tetralogy a new turn seems to come with the implication that the country is more important than mere legitimate succession. John is a bad king and his claim to the crown is tenuous--as his mother reminds him, "Your strong possession much more than your right" (I.i.40)--yet he must be maintained for the good of the realm: ". . . the kingdom is more important than the king."⁷⁵ The kingdom can withstand foreign invasion, ecclesiastical pressure, and internal deceit provided that its citizens keep the clear-eyed realism of the Bastard in maintaining his country's welfare above all else, even if he sometimes has to ally with what might seem to be immorality, that is, a bad king.⁷⁶

The outside forces that come against England, closely connected with John's Arthur problem, are the French invasion of England under the encouragement of Cardinal Pandulph and the revolt of a number of English nobles against John, a revolt in which the betrayers are themselves betrayed. Indeed, betrayal is a strong motif in the play and characterizes the actions of most of the principals, however much they seek justification for it by calling it necessity or righteousness. (All except the Bastard deny the role of

⁷⁵Sen Gupta, p. 100.

⁷⁶Other critics besides those already cited who read King John as a transitional play between the political thought of the two tetralogies include Reese, The Cease of Majesty, p. 263; Donald A. Stauffer, Shakespeare's World of Images: The Development of His Moral Ideas (1949; rpt. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana Univ. Press, Midland Book Edition, 1966), p. 87; Whitaker, Shakespeare's Use of Learning, p. 143.

Commodity.) For example, one of the major conflicts, John's attempts to combat Arthur's claims to the throne, involves an ultimate betrayal, sentencing to death an innocent kinsman. Indirectly the death is accomplished, and Arthur's death gives the Dauphin the opportunity he seeks to invade England, the second--and more dangerous--conflict of the play and challenge to England. Involved in both these conflicts is Cardinal Pandulph, who poses by his office and demands another question--the proper role of England, her just stance and conduct when confronted with what could be interpreted (and is, by John) as improper demands on the English crown by outside ecclesiastical authority.

Pandulph does not make his entrance until well in the play, in III.i, and yet he proves to be a major force in the action as well as a most puzzling problem in authorial intention. The problem of Arthur is yet hanging, but the conflict with France seems to have been settled by "that smooth-faced gentleman, tickling Commodity" when Pandulph first appears to set it going anew. John in his first encounter with Pandulph assumes the role of patriot King standing against meddling envoy:

Thou canst not, Cardinal, devise a name
 So slight, unworthy, and ridiculous
 To charge me to an answer, as the Pope.
 Tell him this tale; and from the mouth of England
 Add thus much more: that no Italian priest
 Shall tithe or toll in our dominions.
 But as we, under Heaven, are supreme head,
 So under Him that great supremacy,
 Where we do reign, we will alone uphold
 Without the assistance of a mortal hand.

So tell the pope, all reverence set apart
To him and his usurped authority.

(III.i.149-60)

King Philip, Pandulph, Constance, Elinor, Blanch, Austria, the Bastard--all have reactions and pleas to John on the question, rooted in their own Commodity--as John's stand is certainly rooted. Yet one feels during this long scene (III. i) a growing respect for John's position; for Shakespeare allows Pandulph to damn himself in his persuasion of Philip that war against England, despite Philip's just-concluded solemn oath of peace, is justified by changed circumstances. Such an interpretation of Shakespeare's intent is not universally accepted, and must be based as much on the dramatic effect of subsequent action as on what occurs in III.i. The Cardinal's reasoning here has its champions. For example: "The speech on the nature of oaths which Pandulph . . . makes is not discreditable casuistry, but sound Catholic doctrine."⁷⁷ Henry Sebastian Bowden likewise argues (pp. 125-26) the sound morality of Pandulph's urging Philip to break with John and his speech on the lawfulness of breaking oaths under changed circumstances.⁷⁸

Other critics view Pandulph's actions in this scene less

⁷⁷ John Henry de Groot, The Shakespeares and "The Old Faith" (New York: King's Crown Press, 1946), p. 212.

⁷⁸ Bowden is hard put to explain how Pandulph could be expected to gain sympathy from a strongly Protestant Elizabethan audience by the excommunication speech, deciding that it serves two purposes: ". . . securing the poet's personal safety, and . . . expressing to those who knew him his own personal condemnation of the Tudor queen" (pp. 124-25).

kindly than do de Groot and Bowden, maintaining that Shakespeare's intention is to expose the Cardinal. For example, Pandulph is ". . . a typical political cleric . . ." for whom ". . . only hatred of England, which has threatened the material interests of the Church, counts. . . ." ⁷⁹ Ernest William Talbert thinks Act III is intended to give strong pro-John emphasis, presenting ". . . Anglican dignity which builds upon anti-French and antipapal emotions. . . ." ⁸⁰ Other critics stand somewhere between those who would uphold both argument and disinterested motive on the part of Pandulph and those who see him, as does John himself, as mere meddling priest. In this view, pure right lies on neither side; both parties stand on shaky moral grounds:

What King John presents us with is a world in which authority is totally untrustworthy. God is spoken for by voices which not only contradict each other but repeatedly belie themselves. . . . This world is so chaotic that as often as not oath-breaking must be considered more meritorious than oath-keeping; witness Hubert and Melun and, as an ambiguous but compelling rationale, Pandulph's irresistible argument. The play demonstrates the simultaneous disintegration of order and speech and truth. ⁸¹

It would seem, in view of Pandulph's later coldblooded

⁷⁹Derek A. Traversi, An Approach to Shakespeare, I (1969; rpt. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Anchor Books, 1969), p. 187. Hazlitt, p. 162, goes further--or less far, in his refusal to comment--in denouncing the entire crew: "The same exposure of the policy of courts and camps, of kings, nobles, priests, and cardinals, takes place here as in the other plays we have gone through [the histories], and we shall not go into disgusting repetition."

⁸⁰Elizabethan Drama, p. 278.

⁸¹Burckhardt, p. 138.

analysis of the sure results of John's treatment of Arthur and his urging Lewis the Dauphin to wait until he can use them, that Burckhardt's view of a morally confused world in which almost everyone embraces Commodity is nearer Shakespeare's overall intention, and nearer the import of the scene, than the view which reads the portrayal of Pandulph as either that of John, a mere meddling Italian priest, or of those critics who would read Pandulph as spotless and disinterested opponent of usurped authority and demoniacal intransigence. In the constant clash between the demands of Commodity and Honor, Commodity has the clear victory, with only the Bastard standing for the kind of devotion to duty and service that will keep England free.⁸² John, Philip, Pandulph--all have Commodity rather than real honor as their prime motive.

Yet, behind John lies the ideal of a free England, dear to Elizabethans and inherent in Shakespeare's plays, and it is this ideal that the Bastard keeps in mind as he supports its unworthy steward, John. And Pandulph certainly poses threats to the ideal. He consequently comes to represent in the play an antagonistic force closer to John's conception of it as evil than to Pandulph's profession of it as disinter-

⁸²James L. Calderwood, "Commodity and Honor in King John," University of Toronto Quarterly, 19 (April 1960), 341-56, sees King John as "a dramatic crucible in which Shakespeare explores and tests two antagonistic ethical principles, Commodity and Honor. The opposition . . . comprises a basic theme to which almost every action and character of the play is vitally related" (p. 341).

ested statesmanship.⁸³ This intention on Shakespeare's part comes out most clearly in III.iv, where Pandulph coolly analyzes what John must do with Arthur now that he has him and urges the Dauphin to capitalize upon what must inevitably be the reaction of the English people to Arthur's murder by immediate invasion and claim to the English crown as next in succession. There can be no question concerning the astuteness of Pandulph's political analysis. Many nobles of England do revolt at news of Arthur's death: even the doughty Bastard is heart-broken and dismayed as he picks up the broken body of the hapless boy. What causes one to lack sympathy for the Cardinal and to disapprove of his actions throughout the play, it seems to me, is the very thing that makes him in his own view the ideal papal legate--his intellectuality and utter lack of feeling. For example, although Constance's lamentations are apt to become tiresome when one considers that one of her eyes is on the English crown for her son, Pandulph's remonstrance of her "madness" (III.iv.43) rings false.⁸⁴ Constance's dreadful anticipation of Arthur's death is exactly Pandulph's own anticipa-

⁸³ John Palmer, Political and Comic Characters of Shakespeare (1962; rpt. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), p. 328, sees Pandulph following Commodity like the others: "There is no anti-Catholic bias in the play. . . . If he [Pandulph] suffers more from this treatment ['cool dispassionate irony'] than the lay politicians, that is only because his moral pretensions are higher and therefore less consistent with his behavior."

⁸⁴ Wolfgang H. Clemen, "Anticipation and Foreboding in Shakespeare's Early Histories," Shakespeare Survey, 6 (1953), 32.

tion, despite his rebuke of her. As he shows with Lewis, he foresees it, and even explicates its meaning to the less politically astute Dauphin:

How green you are and fresh in this old world!
 John lays you plots. The times conspire with you.
 For he that steeps his safety in true blood
 Shall find but bloody safety and untrue.
 This act so evilly born shall cool the hearts
 Of all his people. . . .

(III.iv.145-50)

This advice is "astute ecclesiastical statesmanship";⁸⁵ even Virgil K. Whitaker, who maintains that Shakespeare was essentially indifferent to political questions, thinks the Cardinal's long exposition to Lewis ". . . is a striking exception to Shakespeare's usual indifference to political motives."⁸⁶ But the counsel is also Machiavellian and smacks so much of mere Commodity that one is repelled by it. It is probably too much to say, "His [Pandulph's] 35 lines in this scene (contrasting with eight in the source) sketch the supposed lineaments of a Cardinal Allen or a Father Parsons,"⁸⁷ but they certainly show ". . . the cool calculation of a cunning observer foreseeing that this event will . . . fit into his own game."⁸⁸ The Cardinal's own game, while it has lofty expressed motives, nevertheless conflicts with the whole idea of the rightness of English survival, and from an Elizabethan

⁸⁵ de Groot, p. 213.

⁸⁶ Shakespeare's Use of Learning, p. 129. Whataker also notes that the Cardinal is both more immoral and long-winded in the play than in the source.

⁸⁷ Stevenson, p. 13.

⁸⁸ Clemen, "Anticipation and Foreboding," p. 32.

viewpoint (and a modern, I believe, given Shakespeare's tone), the Cardinal's professed pious indignation at John and the Bastard loses its force, turning into Commodity.

The Bastard Faulconbridge
Is now in England, ransacking the Church,
Offending charity.

(III.iv.171-73)

For if we do not love the Bastard--as much for his own ironic but realistic view of himself as for his patriotism--whom can we love? Not Pandulph. Not John, certainly. As has been pointed out, in the Cardinal's speech to Lewis an even greater master in the art of Commodity than John predicts an action which the audience already has seen John attempt to bring about, thus adding dramatic irony and a sort of dramatic (not moral) justification for John's action. Character and action in John are thus specifically connected.⁸⁹ Both John and the Cardinal are completely dedicated to Commodity. But one of them, however unworthy he may be, is a king of England standing against foreign invasion; and Shakespeare presents his material in such a way that England's safety must take precedence. Pandulph thus emerges as "the enemy" to Elizabethan playwright and audience in his urging Philip to break his oath⁹⁰ and in urging Lewis to capitalize polit-

⁸⁹Adrien Bonjour, "The Road to Swinstead Abbey: A Study of the Sense and Structure of King John," ELH, 18 (1951), 260.

⁹⁰Reese, The Cease of Majesty, p. 272, admires the subtlety of Pandulph's presentation, contrasting it with the crudity of the anti-Catholicism of The Troublesome Raigne: "Here, in all its specious subtlety, men could recognize the Jesuit 'double talk' that played 'fast and loose with faith'

ically upon the sad business of Arthur.

Another interesting function of Pandulph in the scene with Lewis, besides showing his cool foresight in John's inevitable handling of Arthur, is his prediction of the people's interpretation of natural functions as omens, a prediction and fulfillment of it that not only points up Pandulph's shrewdness in judging people but also indicates a change in Shakespeare's dramatic use of omens in the later histories as compared to the earlier. Pandulph has shrewdly guessed of the people that

No common wind, no custom'd event
But they will pluck away his natural cause
And call them meteors, prodigies, and signs,
Abortives, presages, and tongues of Heaven,
Plainly denouncing vengeance upon John.
(III.iv.155-59)

Hubert in his report to John of the five moons, one whirling about the other four, fulfills Pandulph's prediction strikingly (IV.ii.182-202). And yet Arthur is not dead--although he soon will be. Pandulph's prediction is the true one; the strange gyrations of the moon were but a natural event and really signified nothing as omens. Shakespeare, like his chronicle sources, used omens as a means of foreshadowing events frequently in the First Tetralogy. This instance of a natural event being mistaken for an omen points to an in-

and brought confusion to their daily pieties. . . . France's surrender to Pandulph, the more significant for his earlier defiance, warns Elizabethans of the subtler enemy now in their midst." In a note on this quotation Reese states: "The original audience would have seen in this surrender a reference to Henri IV's conclusion that 'Paris is well worth a mass.'"

creasing practice in the Second Tetralogy of assigning omens less significance than in the First.⁹¹

Act IV is entirely taken up with Arthur's final fate, and John reaches his moral nadir in his conference with Hubert. Pandulph is absent, presumably whetting on the French king, as he had promised at the end of Act III. Pandulph appears again most abruptly in Act V, which opens with John handing over the crown and the Cardinal giving it back with the notice that John holds his "sovereign greatness and authority" only by permission of the Pope. In this scene John reaches his political nadir: not only has he buckled to Pandulph's demands, but he also stands in danger of losing his just-regained crown to the French, who, the Bastard reports, have occupied Kent and London and gained the support of most of the English nobility. The Bastard is for action, not proposing to rely on Pandulph's promise to make the French lay down their arms, and John weakly acquiesces: "Have thou the ordering of this present time" (V.i.77). John's brave words to Pandulph at their first encounter have been eaten; the Bastard, as was the Protector in 2 Henry VI, is the sole patriotic force of England.⁹² But there are diplomatic forces

⁹¹Clemen, "Anticipation and Foreboding," p. 32.

⁹²Tillyard, Shakespeare's History Plays, p. 227, points out that after this point "John's resolution hardens or falters as the Bastard is present or absent." The Bastard unites the kingly qualities of the lion, the fox, and the pelican. In contrast, John is shown consistently as only a portion of a body, as pointed out by Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, Shakespeare's Imagery And What It Tells Us (1935; rpt. Cambridge, Eng.: The University Press, 1965), p. 248. Imagis-

which, if not patriotic from England's standpoint, yet indirectly serve England's welfare. Pandulph, his quarrel with John reconciled, now seeks to persuade the French to lay down their arms, as he had promised John he would. He fails; Lewis had learned the Cardinal's lesson of III.iv too well:

Have I not heard these islanders shout out
'Vive le Roi!' as I have banked their towns?
Have I not here the best cards for the game
To win this easy match played for a crown?
(V.ii.103-06)

The young prince who had been so green and fresh in this old world is not awed by the Cardinal's wisdom now when told, "You look but on the outside of this work" (V.ii.109). Nor is the Bastard:

For at hand,
Not trusting to this halting legate here,
Whom he hath used rather for sport than need,
Is warlike John. . . .
(V.iv.173-76)

The Bastard might be accused of partiality in interpreting John's motives and actions, but his patriotic zeal is not in doubt. In this most ironic play, however, even the Bastard's patriotism is not exempt from the irony; for the Cardinal's proposed settlement is shortly accepted by the French, and the English are to meet soon with Pandulph for his disposing of the Dauphin's cause and quarrel. Thus the Bastard's qualified speech at the end of the play, "Naught shall make us rue/ If England to itself do rest but true" (V.vii.117-18)

tically, John is a metonymy, fitting presentation for such an incomplete man and monarch.

is in itself a recognition that England might some day fall a victim to the Commodity seen so frequently in this play. In the English "victory" more than stout patriotism was at work. As a recent student of the political aspects of Shakespeare's plays observes:

The effective use of the weight of conventional legal authority combines with merely crafty political manipulation to establish the invincibility of the English crown--whatever the private failings and mongrel origins of the individuals involved in its defense.⁹³

But the English invincibility is different from that of the First Tetralogy in that Shakespeare places less emphasis upon the guiding hand of Providence in English history and more upon the "modern" idea of history as a result of mundane forces. The idea of the Tudor Myth, so strong in the First Tetralogy, is necessarily absent; and the crown becomes less a question of who legitimately wears it through primogenitary right than of how effectively the crown works for Respublica. Beginning in King John, Shakespeare works toward a new view of history in which the theological frame of God's revenges is abandoned and a new kind of hero is exalted, the first sketch of which is the Bastard.⁹⁴ As an extension of John, who is the de facto king, the Bastard has to swallow even the death of Arthur, despite his sympathies for him; in short, he too sacrifices morality for political effectiveness. He differs from the other adherents of Commodity in one impor-

⁹³H. M. Richmond, Shakespeare's Political Plays (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 119.

⁹⁴Danby, p. 99.

tant respect, however--his defense of Respublica. The structure of the First Tetralogy is clearly restorative; the Second is not,⁹⁵ although the latter plays are finally blessed with a worthy if stained successor, as the first were blessed with a legitimate successor who overthrew the tyrant of a groaning kingdom. King John stands between the two in this respect.

If we trace the progress of Shakespeare's Cardinals from Pandulph to Wolsey and of English kings from John to Henry VIII, we get a glimpse of the emergence of English nationalism and a vivid picture of a very significant aspect of the transition from the medieval world to the modern. Here, indeed, we can visualize the forces, which, lying behind the vows made by vulgarly ambitious men, effect a change from one epoch to another. That is the true function of historical drama as distinct from chronicles or chronicle plays.⁹⁶

Besides Pandulph, one other cleric figures in the action of King John, but in a most undramatic, oblique fashion. He is of course the monk who poisons John at Swinstead Abbey. Not properly a character at all, since his actions are merely reported, he is likewise a shadowy figure dramatically. His motives for such a drastic act must be inferred; they are not dramatically shown. It is true that Shakespeare has at least four references to John's looting the church: I.i.47-49; III.iii.6-8; III.iv.171-73; IV.ii.141-42, but the references are so unemphatic and dispersed in the crowded action that they can hardly be termed dramatically sufficient for the poisoning. It is likewise true that Pandulph, when John was under sentence of excommunication, had sanctioned John's

⁹⁵Burckhardt, pp. 173-74.

⁹⁶Sen Gupta, pp. 5-6.

murder as a heretic:

Then, by the lawful power that I have,
Thou shalt stand cursed and excommunicate.
And blessed shall he be that doth revolt
From his allegiance to an heretic;
And meritorious shall that hand be called,
Canonized and worshipped as a saint,
That takes away by any secret course
Thy hateful life.

(III.i.172-79)

But all that was presumably changed upon John's submission to Pandulph. The most likely explanation for Shakespeare's failing to motivate the deed clearly is that, in removing much of the anti-Catholic action from the chief source, The Troublesome Raigne, he took away that which makes the poisoning episode motivated and expected but kept the episode itself.⁹⁷ After all, John must give way to Prince Henry and the reestablishment of order, and the monk is a convenient device to bring that about. With John dead the succession can be legitimized for the restoration of order that is characteristic of Shakespeare's endings. John's death is thus a dramatic and moral necessity.⁹⁸ England has survived; and even though a king is dead, another--and almost certainly a better--is ready. Neither political Cardinal nor monkish poisoner can do England permanent harm.

⁹⁷ Whitaker, Shakespeare's Use of Learning, p. 135; Reese, The Cease of Majesty, p. 275.

⁹⁸ Cutts, The Shattered Glass, p. 87, believes that Shakespeare intended to portray John's death ambiguously, not making clear whether he died from the fever he had been suffering from before going to Swinstead or from monkish vengeance. He likewise insists that John is the focus of the play, in control throughout, and that he triumphs. Such a reading gives John a more heroic role than most critics see him playing.

CHAPTER III

THE SECOND TETRALOGY AND HENRY VIII

Richard II

When Shakespeare decided to go back two hundred years in English history for a play on the Lancastrian genesis as royalty, he had served his apprenticeship as a playwright in the three major kinds of Elizabethan drama. His true bent in tragedy still lay in the future, to be sure, and he was not to discover it until he abandoned emphasis on politics for emphasis on ethics, even though the tragical element in the early histories may already have suggested the richer possibilities of tragedy centered in personality rather than in politics that was to be the mode of the great tragedies. He had already marked out, in Two Gentlemen of Verona, the line he was to follow in romantic comedy through Twelfth Night. He had not yet, however, had his full say in English history. The First Tetralogy, as satisfying as it must have been as a dramatic rendering of the long struggle between Lancastrians and Yorkists which culminated in tyranny overthrown and civil concord established in the Tudor settlement, had nevertheless been an apprentice effort as well as

an incomplete historical presentation. Shakespeare in the First Tetralogy had learned much of the depiction of human nature, of language to express individual character, and the possibilities of history as the vehicle for personal conflict which in itself would be a truer picture of history than the chronicle tapestry of the First Tetralogy. He was ready for the Second--or Major--Tetralogy.

Shakespeare's kings had had perhaps more than their share of personal and royal failings. Henry VI had lost all that an energetic father had gained; through three plays he had been shown as pious but ineffectual. Edward IV had been voluptuous and partial. Richard of Gloucester, abounding in energy and purpose, had been a tyrant. John, a wicked man personally, had been a temporizer, hardly a model for the ideal monarch. Now, in Richard of Bordeaux, Shakespeare draws the most complete portrait of a king he has yet done, and contrasts him with his more fit but usurping Lancastrian rival.

Closely connected with these kings had been a number of clerics which, like the kings they supported or opposed, were drawn with considerable care and force. In 1 and 2 Henry VI, Cardinal Beaufort had served as prime example of the kind of civil dissension and self-seeking that would cause Harry of Windsor to lose all that Harry of Monmouth had gained. His red hat outranking the mitres of even the two English archbishops, Beaufort had also symbolized Henry's failure in ecclesiastical as well as national and in-

ternational statesmanship. The clerics of Richard III's England, like the rest of the realm, had been cowed and used by Richard until they finally rose with the rest in revolt. Cardinal Pandulph had been shown--if King John preceded Richard II in composition, a disputed matter--as a formidable international politician and in every way John's equal--perhaps even his superior--in the effective management of power. Now in Richard II, another cleric performs important dramatic and thematic functions. He is the Bishop of Carlisle, who, along with the Abbot of Westminster, provides a focus for the opposition to Henry Bolingbroke's usurpation of the crown from the weak--but divinely anointed--King Richard.

A major question in the interpretation of the meaning of the Second Tetralogy is Shakespeare's attitude toward the crown: the importance of primogenitary succession and whether de facto sovereignty outweighs it; whether rebellion against a reigning monarch is ever morally or politically justified, and whether rebellion, even if successful politically, leaves such a stain on the crown that the possessor--and the country--must suffer for it. In the First Tetralogy the answers to these questions had appeared to be negative: rebellion against King Henry VI was not justified despite York's apparent primogenitary right and probable superior ability. The Yorkists were shown as enjoying only a brief hour of glory in the crown. The most successful of them, Richard III, was depicted in orthodox

Tudor fashion as a monster who, however necessary he may have been in God's scheme as a scourge for England's sins, was as necessarily deposed by the true uniter of opposing royal lines and of the country, Henry Richmond. In all of these plays, however, despite the fact that primogeniture, rebellion, the role of Providence in historical events, proper attributes of kingship--the complex of factors that may be examined in depicting the life of a nation--were all involved to some degree, the one single concept to which all others were subordinate was the welfare of the realm. The kingdom is greater than its king, even if he be God's divinely appointed ruler. Respublica vincit omnia. A logical corollary is that a king who from strict primogenitary rules is illegitimate might, under certain circumstances, be better for the realm than God's anointed. This idea is borne out in King John, where John is preferable to Arthur if Arthur's succession means foreign domination of England. This is not to say that Shakespeare placed no value on the concept of the ruler as divinely appointed supreme head of state--he was too good an Elizabethan for that. But surveying the past, Shakespeare developed firm ideas of the proper role and behavior befitting the monarch. Thus, the Second Tetralogy is not so positive as the First in insisting absolutely on primogeniture and divine right. As in King John, a de facto king is a usurper, he may suffer for it, but provided that the country does not suffer unduly, or that it be ultimately redeemed

from its suffering by glory that heals the scars, even a deposition may be justified. Such seemed to be the lesson of history--and the meaning of the Second Tetralogy--despite Tudor opposition to the idea. One hundred years after the Spanish Armada the entire country was to accept it; Shakespeare, surveying the Lancastrian successors of Richard of Bordeaux, appears to accept it in the 1550's, albeit reluctantly. And with reservations. But that ultimate good came of it in the glorious reign of Henry V, just as ultimate good came out of the War of the Roses in Henry Richmond, seems clear in these connected plays. Just as clear is that Shakespeare arranged them, plotted and executed them, to that end.

Shakespeare does not oversimplify, however; he is careful to present both sides of the point, about which so much controversy is possible. And he is not arbitrary. Richard, perhaps justifiably deposed in the long run (the murder is another matter), gets a full hearing. He has powerful champions: the weight of tradition and theory is on his side and the results of his overthrow are painful, so that subsequent history becomes, in part and for a time, his ally. One of the chief spokesmen for the Yorkist concept of divine right in the first play of the Second Tetralogy is the Bishop of Carlisle, and his chief function in the play is to enunciate that concept in such a way that its force is apparent.

Carlisle first appears in III.ii, where King Richard

and his followers--already shown as sadly diminished--have landed on the coast of Wales on their return from the abortive Irish expedition that gave Bolingbroke the opportunity to return from banishment to a country in the keeping of a weak and vacillating Regent, York. Richard, apprised of Bolingbroke's movements and suspecting his motives, continues the poetic self-dramatization that has characterized--and will continue to do so--his conduct in the play. He professes to believe that the very stones of the coast will prove armed soldiers ere he, the King, shall falter under rebellion. Carlisle is at one with Richard's faith but more practical in the manner of implementing it:

Fear not, my lord. That Power that made you King
Hath power to keep you King in spite of all.
The means that Heaven yields must be embraced,
And not neglected; else, if Heaven would
And we will not, Heaven's offer we refuse,
The proffered means of succor and redress.
(III.ii.27-32)

Richard is ready for no one's counsel, however phrased, but his own, as he shows when Aumerle bluntly rephrases Carlisle's diplomatic warning:

He means, my lord, that we are too remiss
Whilst Bolingbroke, through our security,
Grows strong and great in substance and in power.
(III.ii.33-35)

In a magnificently ironic heroic simile (III.ii.35-53), Richard compares Bolingbroke with thieves and robbers who range at night unchecked but stand "bare and naked, trembling at themselves" when the sun--that is, Richard--discovers them. Angels will fight on the side of God's Richard. Angels are needed, for Salisbury immediately brings

word that Richard's Welsh supporters, hearing he was dead (a prophetic note!), "Are gone to Bolingbroke, dispersed, and fled" (III.ii.74). This scene in truth is a climactic one--perhaps, in terms of the Bolingbroke-Richard conflict, the climax--for in it Richard reveals that he will not fight against Bolingbroke with soldiers, but with the Yorkist faith in the divine right of kings alone. Ending the scene, a reversal of the previous imagery of Richard and Bolingbroke symbolically states Richard's already-made decision and basic attitude:

Discharge my followers. Let them hence away,
From Richard's night to Bolingbroke's fair day.
(III.ii.217-18)

This in spite of another even more vigorous appeal from Carlisle shortly before:

My lord, wise men ne'er sit and wail their woes,
But presently prevent the ways to wail.
To fear the foe, since fear oppresses strength,
Gives in your weakness strength unto your foe,
And so your follies fight against yourself.
Fear, and be slain. No worse can come to fight.
And fight and die is death destroying death
Where fearing dying pays death servile breath.
(III.ii.178-85)

But Richard has made his decision already, placing his entire faith in divine right.

The first point to make of Carlisle's role here is its obvious irony. A Bishop of the Church is placed in the position of cautioning against sole reliance on faith.¹ The

¹The advice is not unchristian of course; man must take responsible action. As pointed out in Roland Mushat Frye, Shakespeare and Christian Doctrine (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1963), pp. 162-64, Carlisle's admonition is in accord with the contemporary teaching in such matters of Luther, Calvin, and Hooker.

good bishop first gives in substance that most worldly piece of proverbial lore--God helps those who help themselves--and then, in his other speech in the scene, again counsels action, this time with no mention of God's help.² In the context of the entire scene, with Richard's violent and abrupt changes in mood from blind optimism to black pessimism and back again, then to final capitulation to "Bolingbroke's fair day," Carlisle's two speeches, quoted here in their entirety, effectively point up Richard's weakness. Given the personalities of the two principals of the play, the deposition is already assured.

A more complex question introduced here is the extent to which Carlisle's--and Richard's--faith in the divine right of kings reflects Shakespeare's own belief. What is the essential right of the question when a divinely-appointed king does wrong by his kingdom? What is the proper redress? Is rebellion justified? Is this rebellion justified? Critical opinion on Shakespeare's attitude toward these questions varies. On the one hand Shakespeare is seen as agreeing with Richard and Carlisle that rebellion is never justifiable:

Richard II embodies Shakespeare's fullest treatment of the concept of the divine right of kings. . . . There are, however, enough references in these plays [the First Tetralogy] to show that Shakespeare

²Ribner, p. 111, points out that ll. 178-185 contain the same advice that Margaret gives King Henry VI in a similar situation (3 Hen. VI V.iv.1-12). "In both plays, Shakespeare asserts that a king will be successful if he acts strongly for himself."

already knew and accepted it. It does not occur in his sources, and his ideas very probably came from the Homilies.³

On the other hand, Shakespeare is seen as disputing the doctrine:

The dramatic impact of the entire scene [III.ii] is not a triumphant statement of the great truths of the Tudors. If anything, the scene illustrates the pathetic insufficiency of these doctrines by themselves. Something more than God's protection is needed to preserve the king in the harsh reality of Renaissance power politics.⁴

A third view--and a telling one, in view of Shakespeare's characteristic balance of presentation--is that the scene in itself offers no positive proof of anything at all concerning Shakespeare's political beliefs. Of the questions posed in the Bolingbroke-Richard complex, Sen Gupta maintains:

Various answers are given to these questions by various dramatic characters, and the most reasonable view is to take these answers as characteristic of the speakers--as, indeed they almost always are--rather than of positions of a particular view of history or politics.⁵

That Shakespeare's characters speak first and foremost for themselves is indisputable. Yet, the whole complex of a play, shaped as it is into art that imitates and interprets life, almost always has a meaningful comment on its situations and conflicts. Richard II is no exception. Despite the conviction of Richard and Carlisle of the truth of their stand, the play shows that Richard lost his throne as a consequence of his own weakness of purpose, faulty conception

³Whitaker, Shakespeare's Use of Learning, pp. 74-75.

⁴Ribner, p. 164.

⁵Sen Gupta, p. 116.

of the proper role and function of a ruler,⁶ and actions--or lack of them. This scene shows that in his heart he has abdicated already, and Carlisle's two speeches underline the attitude in their opposition to it.⁷ Thus, Richard's exalted concept of the crown causes him to lose it; Lancastrian power triumphs over Richardian principle.

The Flint Castle scene (III.ii) which follows Carlisle's reproof of Richard's inaction is, in terms of Richard's despair, merely an extension of the mood of the previous scene. In wider terms it is much more important, for it brings Richard and Bolingbroke together and completes Richard's capitulation (save for the deposition scene itself):

What must the King do now? Must he submit?
The King shall do it. Must he be deposed?
The King shall be contented. Must he lose
The name of King? O' God's name, let it go.
(III.iii.143-46)

The Bishop of Carlisle, Aumerle, Scroop, and Salisbury, supporters of Richard, are present, but, significantly, do not speak at all except for Aumerle's two lines of advice against direct defiance of Bolingbroke and another line by

⁶Keeton, p. 271, sees this scene, as does Ribner, as an indication of Shakespeare's denial of the validity of Richard's beliefs.

⁷Derek A. Traversi, Shakespeare from "Richard II" to "Henry V" (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1957), p. 33, reads Carlisle's second exhortation (ll. 178-85) as less than a firm rejoinder to Richard's despair, feeling that the emphasis is more on the acceptance of death than on hope of prevailing over Bolingbroke. If it be consolation at all, he says, it is the "self-deceiving comfort of Macbeth [rather] than a source of true encouragement."

him which is essentially a stage direction, perhaps a cue line: "Northumberland comes back from Bolingbroke" (III.iii.142). The other Yorkists are silent; the scene is Richard's. Their silence reinforces Richard's isolation and helplessness, a helplessness earlier recognized in the comments of Harry Percy and Northumberland when they first approached the castle:

<u>H. Percy.</u>	Yes, my good lord, It doth contain a king. King Richard lies Within the limits of yon lime and stone. And with him are the Lord Aumerle, Lord Salisbury, Sir Stephen Scroop, besides a clergyman Of holy reverence, who, I cannot learn.
<u>North.</u>	Oh, belike it is the Bishop of Carlisle. (III.iii.24-30)

So much for the Bishop of Carlisle!⁸

Northumberland's short view of the Bishop of Carlisle fails to do justice to the latter's thematic and dramatic importance. Carlisle had stood silently by in the Flint Castle episode, true, there being nothing to say and his silence emphasizing Richard's isolation and pathos. Following the symbolic scene in the Duke of York's garden (III. iv) is the deposition scene; there Carlisle makes an impassioned defense of Richard and, most important to this play and to the meaning of the entire tetralogy, utters a prophecy of the dire results of deposing Richard that is a major

⁸ Ernest William Talbert, The Problem of Order: Elizabethan Political Commonplaces and an Example of Shakespeare's Art (Chapel Hill: The Univ. of N. Carolina Press, 1962), pp. 158-77, exhaustively analyzes the Flint Castle scene as an artistic complexity (Talbert's term) which contrasts the Lancastrian and Yorkist antithetical attitudes toward kingship.

theme of the Henry the Fourth plays that follow.

The entire deposition scene is a masterpiece of dramaturgy. It opens with "King Bolingbroke"--he is acting like a king--conducting an enquiry into the Duke of Gloucester's death, an enquiry which parallels the opening scene of the play in which Bolingbroke and Mowbray made mutual accusations before King Richard. Just as, in the opening scene, the real subject had been Richard's part in Gloucester's murder, a charge that could not be stated openly, so here the real question is Aumerle's opposition to Bolingbroke. The charge is denied and mixed with other accusations and charges, to and fro, among the nobles. Mowbray is involved here, also, and Bolingbroke states that he will "repeal" him from exile to face Aumerle. The Bishop of Carlisle informs Bolingbroke of Mowbray's death in exile and praises his chivalric life as a crusader. Not too much should be made of Carlisle's speech here; but it is interesting to note that Mowbray, Bolingbroke's occasion for being banished in the first place, died full of honors and actually fought "For Jesu Christ in glorious Christian field,/ Streaming the ensign of the Christian cross/ Against black pagans, Turks, and Saracens" (IV.i.93-95) whereas Bolingbroke is only to talk of a crusade and get no closer to the Holy Land than the Jerusalem Room of his palace. The real point of the episode is twofold, to foreshadow the civil strife that Bolingbroke as king will have to endure and to demonstrate Bolingbroke's quickness and vigor in handling the quarreling nobles as opposed to Richard's earlier

vacillation: "Lords appellants,/ Your differences shall all rest under gage/ Till we assign you to your days of trial" (IV.i.104-106). Unlike Richard earlier, Bolingbroke will have no trial by combat and no theatrics.

But he will have the crown, as York confirms after the disposal of the quarrel. Carlisle's function here is central to scene, play, and tetralogy in his impassioned outburst at Bolingbroke's "In God's name I'll ascend the regal throne" (IV.i.113). The oration⁹ contains several crucial points in succession: the question of what subject can judge a king; accusation of treason against Bolingbroke for presuming to do so; and prophecy of civil discord and war should Bolingbroke be crowned. The prophecy is the most striking part of a striking passage, stating a theme of the Second Tetralogy and providing a link among the plays:

And if you crown him, let me prophesy,
 The blood of English shall manure the ground
 And future ages groan for this foul act.
 Peace shall go sleep with Turks and infidels,
 And in this seat of peace tumultuous wars
 Shall kin with kin and Kind with kind confound.
 Disorder, horror, fear, and mutiny
 Shall here inhabit, and this land be called
 The field of Golgotha and dead men's skulls.
 Oh, if you raise this house against this house,
 It will the woefulest division prove
 That ever fell upon this cursed earth.
 Prevent it, resist it, let it not be so,
 Lest child, child's children, cry against you 'Woe':¹⁰
 (IV.i.136-49)

⁹ Kennedy admires this oration as one of "two good examples of elaborate and imposing state settings" in Richard II (p. 159), and also (pp. 105-06) as an example of "a maturing sense for the use of argumentative rhetoric. . . ."

¹⁰ Clemen, "Anticipation and Foreboding," p. 35 (n.), observes that this prophecy, as do almost all in Richard II,

Those who interpret Shakespeare's sympathies as lying entirely with Richard and with his concept of the divine right of kings find strong support in Carlisle's prophecy. In light of the York-Lancaster conflict throughout the period from Richard II to Richard III, the deposition and usurpation could be regarded as the direct cause of all the subsequent strife until the Tudor settlement. There is much internal evidence that Shakespeare himself viewed the matter that way. Rebellion against a lawful monarch, unless he be a tyrant, is never justified.¹¹ And yet, as stated earlier, Shakespeare by the time of King John and Richard II had considered history thoroughly enough to be concerned first of all with the welfare of the realm and only secondly with political dogma. Bolingbroke commits a grave crime, true; and he pays for it with an unquiet conscience and reign. But in 1 and 2 Henry IV, Bolingbroke, now in Richard's position, with powerful forces seeking his overthrow, is the king; the sympathies aroused by the action are in favor of him and the Lancastrians. After all, the new rebels choose to be rebels. It seems clear that the chief lesson of the

stretches beyond the frame of the play, in contrast to those of Richard III, which are fulfilled within the play. By situation, diction, rhythm, imagery this prophecy and that of Gaunt are "set off to impress us and make us listen to the manifold implications and predictions they contain" (p. 31).

¹¹As Tillyard, Shakespeare's History Plays, p. 261, observes: "The speeches of the Bishop of Carlisle and of Richard to Northumberland . . . are worthy statements of the disorder that follows the deposition of the rightful king. In doctrine the play is entirely orthodox. Shakespeare knows that Richard's crimes never amounted to tyranny and hence that outright rebellion against him was a crime."

Second Tetralogy, taken in its entirety, is not so much the horror of civil war authored by Richard's deposition, horrible as that is, but a lesson in the nature and practice of the royal virtues and conduct. That, at least, is the lesson of Hal's development through 1 and 2 Henry IV into Henry V. In terms of the structure of the Second Tetralogy, Henry of Monmouth comes to represent all that Richard of Bordeaux was not. Thus, lamentable as the deposition is, its final product is an ideal prince, just as the tyranny of Richard III--a Yorkist, be it remembered, and king by primogenitary right--has as its final product the Tudor settlement.¹² These questions of ultimate meaning in Carlisle's prophecy are for the audience and scholars, however, not for Carlisle. As a representative of medieval order, he knows the meaning of the deposition--the only meaning it can possibly have for him--and states it most emphatically.

Some features of his expression and imagery bear further examination. Solemn and effective throughout, the

¹²My opinion on this matter is a minority one among Shakespeare scholars, who tend to emphasize Shakespeare's horror of civil strife and to root that strife in the deposition and usurpation. Perhaps the crux is a matter of emphasis. I can readily agree that the deposition and usurpation were indirectly the cause of the subsequent strife but believe strongly that the Second Tetralogy after Richard II emphasizes not so much the horrors of civil strife as the development of an ideal prince. Whatever Richard was, he was not that. A recent critic of the history plays, Sen Gupta, goes even further than my stand, denying that Bolingbroke was a usurper at all: "Departing from Hall's view of Henry IV as the first author of the civil strife that later raged in England, Shakespeare presents him in this play as a man who siezes the crown but is no usurper because his ambition grows with his opportunities and the crown is to him more a gift than a prize won by force or diplomacy" (p. 124).

speech becomes especially impressive near the end with its Biblical references and echoes: Golgotha, house against house, cursed earth, children's children suffering the sin of their fathers.¹³ The Golgotha reference ties in with numerous other allusions and images of the play whereby Richard is depicted as a suffering Christ:

This set of allusions . . . serves admirably to point up Richard's own view of the situation and also to underline effectively the official Elizabethan view that (in the language of the Homilies) 'The violence and injury that is committed against authority is committed against God.'¹⁴

A recurrent image in the play of rising and falling is echoed in Carlisle's "Oh, if you raise this house against this house,/ It will the woofullest division prove/ That ever fell upon this cursed earth."¹⁵ Another favorite Shake-

¹³ Richard Noble, Shakespeare's Biblical Knowledge and Use of the Book of Common Prayer (1935; rpt. New York; Octagon Books, 1970), p. 151, notes: "Both Norfolk and the Bishop of Carlisle, in proportion to the number of their lines, quote Scripture very largely."

¹⁴ J. A. Bryant, Jr., Hippolyta's View: Some Christian Aspects of Shakespeare's Plays (Lexington: Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1961), p. 23. Fitch, pp. 145-46, objects to the "careless use of this sort of analogy" among critics, feeling that it is overdone and "belongs to a degenerate religious romanticism." Of Richard II and "Christ imagery," however, he makes a concession: "Curiously enough, the one authentic volunteer as a Christ figure, Richard II, does not appear on the list of preferred candidates. Perhaps this is because he is the only one who is convinced of the analogy. Nevertheless, in Richard II it is obvious that religion is being used to enhance the awfulness of rebellion against the sovereign." Cutts, The Shattered Glass, p. 146, observes that the Christ parallel as accepted by Carlisle and Aumerle is illogical in view of their hopes: ". . . the comparison with Christ automatically means accepting the premise that all is lost in this world. Carlisle and Aumerle are strangely unaware of this."

¹⁵ Arthur Suzman, "Imagery and Symbolism in Richard II,"

spearean political image, that of a garden allowed to deteriorate and decay by the ignorance and carelessness of the gardener (the function of III.iv), is used in Carlisle's referring to Richard as having been "planted many years" and in the warning "The blood of English shall manure the ground. . . ."¹⁶ Carlisle's oration effectively performs the characterizing and thematic functions for which it was intended. Shakespeare in this most balanced of plays is careful to balance even this magnificent Richardian speech with a Lancastrian foil, however. When Carlisle ceases, Northumberland as Bolingbroke's chief supporter ironically rejoins: "Well have you argued, sir, and for your pains,/ Of capital treason we arrest you here" (IV.i. 150-151).¹⁷ As is true for the play as a whole, Richardian idealism falls victim to Lancastrian pragmatism.

The next episode in this single-scene act is the famous deposition, in which Richard exercises his self-dramatizing bent to the fullest. Carlisle and the only other cleric shown in the play, the Abbot of Westminster, have no part save silent and sympathetic observation of it. They do, however, have a significant part in the third major episode of this scene-act, after all the principals exeunt except for

Shakespeare Quarterly, 7 (Autumn 1956), 365.

¹⁶Pointed out in Spurgeon, p. 221.

¹⁷Reese, Shakespeare, p. 430, cites Carlisle's speech as one of a number of examples that indicate that Shakespeare "regarded any sort of explicit moralising as inadequate for the larger purposes of life." The only thing Carlisle achieved by his eloquence was arrest for treason.

the two clerics and Aumerle. Although only fourteen lines long, the episode shows that Bolingbroke's unquiet time will begin perhaps sooner than he supposes and emphasizes the continuation of the Richardian view of divine right just concluded in the deposition scene.¹⁸ In response to Aumerle's question whether there is "no plot/ To rid the realm of this pernicious blot?" (IV.i.324-25), the Abbot of Westminster, whom Northumberland had earlier designated as Carlisle's keeper until his trial for treason, answers affirmatively: "Come home with me to supper, and I'll lay/ A plot shall show us all a merry day" (IV.i.133-34).¹⁹ In the Henry the Fourth plays the only clerics to be depicted will be rebels against the Lancasters; it is entirely appropriate that the opposition begin in Richard II among the only two clerics presented in this play.²⁰ Although the opposition

¹⁸ Reese, The Cease of Majesty, p. 241, notes that this episode is "one of those telling anti-climaxes which Shakespeare manages so well but which scare producers into making ill-considered cuts. This tiny pendent is essential to the scene, to show that Richard's apprehension of his kingship is not mere vanity."

¹⁹ The "plot shall show us all a merry day" is, of course, promise of fulfillment of Carlisle's earlier prophecy and might be considered ironic since it will involve Carlisle himself. Talbert, The Problem of Order, p. 181, whose analysis of Act IV is the lengthiest and most thorough I have seen, denies such intention: "As unemphasized as Bolingbroke's preceding 'hypocrisy' is any irony inherent in this final grouping of characters in which a churchly prophet leaves the stage with those who by plots would disturb a kingdom and make the bishop's woeful prophecy come true. . . ."

²⁰ Stevenson, pp. 2-5, notes that among the enumerated retinue of Bolingbroke upon his return from exile is the "Archbishop late of Canterbury" (II.i.281) and that both Holinshed and Halle show him to be an important part of the

will be long and bloody in the two succeeding plays, Carlisle and the Abbot of Westminster will have no part in it, as events turn out, for in V.vi, a "busy" scene which ties up loose ends of the play, Harry Percy reports that the Abbot is dead. He presents Carlisle to Bolingbroke for his doom, however. Since the first fifteen lines of the brief scene are taken up with reports of rebellion and rebels' beheadings, it is somewhat a surprise that Carlisle is spared:

Carlisle, this is your doom.
 Choose out some secret place, some reverend room,
 More than thou hast, and with it joy thy life.
 So as thou livest in peace, die free from strife.
 For though mine enemy thou hast ever been,
 High sparks of honor in thee have I seen.
 (V.vi.24-29)

Bolingbroke had earlier spared Aumerle, however, foreshadowing the mercy shown Carlisle. Likely reasons for Bolingbroke's forgiving Carlisle are, first, that in a play which carefully balances audience sympathies, some mercy is need-

rebellion. Shakespeare, however, completely suppresses him save for the single reference, using only loyal clerics. Stevenson's speculation as to the reason is that Shakespeare, knowing of Elizabeth's feeling that she was Richard II, felt that she would be pleased only by a loyal cleric in the play. He cites additional confirmation of his guess: Whitgift had a tendency to ban plays with obvious contemporary parallels; Elizabeth was crowned by Dr. Owen Oglethorpe, Bishop of Carlisle, when Heath and Tunstall refused; and in 1595 Philip Howard, the Romanist Earl of Arundel (family of the "Archbishop late of Canterbury") died or was executed after a long imprisonment. The suppression of the deposition scene until Elizabeth's death is a commonplace in Elizabethan dramatic history, the usual reason being given as Elizabeth's identification with Richard (as in Stevenson.) Thomas Jameson, "The Hidden Shakespeare: A Study of the Poet's Undercover Activity in the Theatre" (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1967), pp. 71-73 (n.), suggests that Elizabeth was not really disturbed by the view of herself as Richard but by the suppressed recognition that she was Bolingbroke to Mary Queen of Scots.

ed in Bolingbroke to keep him from appearing monstrous. Just before Carlisle is pardoned there are reports of executions, and just after, Exton enters carrying Richard in his coffin. Bolingbroke certainly needs a humanizing touch. Another probable reason is Shakespeare's generally respectful attitude toward men of the cloth.²¹ If a man like Cardinal Beaufort can die in bed (albeit badly), then certainly such a universally recognized good man as Carlisle must be spared execution. Both his motives and methods are honorable, and "high sparks of honor" do not deserve mean punishment, as Bolingbroke recognizes. The end of the Abbot of Westminster is less cheerful, but the objectivity of the source of the report, Henry Percy, is suspect: "The grand conspirator, Abbot of Westminster,/ With clog of conscience and sour melancholy/ Hath yielded up his body to the grave" (V.vi.19-21). Thus ends the two clerics' part in the "merry plot." It will be continued, however, by--to the new king--unlikely forces.

²¹This is a disputed matter, ranging in attitude from Max Huhner, "Shakspere's Conception of the Clergy," Shakespeare Association Bulletin, 11 (1936), p. 161: "As a matter of fact, Shakespeare's delineation of the clergy is extremely biased, and throughout his works he evinces a dislike for the cloth which leads him to unfair generalizations"; to Samuel T. Coleridge, Seven Lectures on Shakespeare and Milton, ed. J. Payne Collier, (1856; rpt. New York: Burt Franklin, Research and Source Work Ser. 276), p. 75: ". . . in Shakespeare they [priests] always carry with them our love and respect . . . and, like the rest, his characters of priests are truly drawn from the general body." It has been shown that the plays as a whole have more "good" characters than "bad." See Harbage, pp. 163-173. This emphasis certainly holds true for the clerics.

The functions of the Bishop of Carlisle in this play, it should be reiterated, are important ones. Carlisle, like Gaunt, is an establiher of Richard's moral responsibility,²² a responsibility which Richard fails. This is shown in both the counsel to take action against Bolingbroke and the speech on obedience delivered to Bolingbroke. The high ideals of that speech, contrasted with Richard's behavior, effectively underline Richard's weaknesses and failings as a king even though Carlisle is defending Richard's divine right. In terms of the latter concept, Carlisle has also a choric function.²³ The basic conflict of the play is between Richardian faith in divine right and Lancastrian power politics. Carlisle is a spokesman, and a most eloquent one, for the Richardian concept.²⁴ His prophecy of subsequent strife is, of course, a powerful thematic link among the plays of the Second Tetralogy and between the two tetralogies. Finally, his high sense of honor, which impresses even Bolingbroke, is a reinforcement of the Richardian stand which other supporters such as Bushy, Bagot,

²² Discussed in Whitaker, The Mirror up to Nature, pp. 120-21.

²³ Brents Stirling, The Populace in Shakespeare (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1949), p. 50.

²⁴ Sen Gupta, p. 5, notes that Carlisle's argument is not based on ecclesiastical prerogative and the supremacy of the Church but on the inviolability of the king's authority, and is thus different from Pandulph's basic attitude. This difference he attributes to Shakespeare's awareness of change in the concept of the role of ecclesiastical and secular power during the two century gap between the two. If true, Shakespeare was a more penetrating student of history than is usually supposed.

and Green do nothing to further. The Bishop of Carlisle and the Abbot of Westminster play their part in what has been seen as the primary technique Shakespeare used in Richard II: ". . . keeping our sympathies in suspense. The structure of the play demands that we choose. . . . But Shakespeare does not let us make the choice."²⁵

1 Henry IV

As a dramatization of a crucial political issue centered in personal conflict, Richard II is much tighter in construction than 1 Henry IV. But as historical drama and as comedy--a new note in the histories--1 Henry IV is far superior to the other English histories. Its range of characters and events is sweeping; its vitality is robust; and its chief political lesson is clear and pertinent. In theme and conflict the play on its political level is a direct outgrowth of Richard II. The new king, Henry IV, at the end of that play had subdued his opposition, he imagined, and was secure on his throne. Richard II had had a different message for audience and reader, however; it was clear that both Henry and the country were to enjoy no peace. Again and again this point was made: in Carlisle's prophecy, in Richard's warning to Northumberland; in Henry's expression of discontent at Prince Hal's way of living; and in Henry's guilt over the spilled blood of Rich-

²⁵ Norman Rabkin, Shakespeare and the Common Understanding (New York: The Free Press, 1967), pp. 86-87.

ard, a guilt that had made him vow a voyage of expiation to the Holy Land. Soon after 1 Henry IV opens these omens of unrest are shown to be at work still and threatening all civil concord. Troubles on the Scotch and Welsh borders have caused guilt-ridden Henry to break off his business for the Holy Land. He sins in envy, as he says, that Northumberland's son Hotspur exemplifies all honor and chivalry whilst riot and dishonor stain the brow of his own Harry. More ominous in terms of Carlisle's prophecy is the break between Henry's strongest supporter, Northumberland, and the king whom he had helped to power. By the end of Act I Northumberland and his friends are plotting rebellion again, this time against Henry, thus bearing out both Carlisle and Richard's warnings. Soon the erstwhile friends will be in open revolt. This revolt and its temporary suppression at the close of the play will comprise the main conflict.

The subplot, which threatens to become the center of interest throughout and does so when it is united with the main plot after Act III, involves the antics of the madcap Prince Hal and Falstaff among their friends of the Boar's Head Inn. Regarded by everybody as an idler and wastrel, Hal is not that at all, as is shown when plot and subplot coalesce in Act IV. Falstaff does not learn Hal's purpose and essential nature until the end of 2 Henry IV, and King Henry has recurring doubts until his death. But Hotspur--and the reader--learn it at the Battle of Shrewsbury which ends the revolt that is the main conflict of this play.

Gadshill robbery. These subplot scenes function both as comedy and as contrast to the conspiracy scenes that precede and follow them. In the latter conspiracy scene the Archbishop of York is mentioned twice in enumeration of Henry's enemies by the sanguine and impetuous Hotspur:

Why my Lord of York commends the plot and the general course of the action. . . . Is there not my father, my uncle, and myself? Lord Edmund Mortimer, my Lord of York, and Owen Glendower? Is there not besides the Douglas?

(II.iii.21-26)

Although not fast enough for Hotspur, the rebellion is building up.

Another cleric besides the Archbishop of York is apparently involved in the conspiracy as Shakespeare presents it, but only by implication and in an oblique way. In an ominous display of discord and jealousy that foreshadows later division and disunity among the rebels, Glendower, Hotspur, and Mortimer are shown in III.i dividing the kingdom among themselves on a map drawn by "the Archdeacon," as Mortimer says (III.i.72). He is otherwise unidentified, but was probably the Archdeacon of Bangor.²⁶ The scene develops the character of the principals, especially Glendower and Hotspur, humanizing the latter in his badinage with Lady Percy as well as showing his faults: fierce pride, hot tem-

²⁶As is pointed out in Irving Ribner and George Lyman Kittredge, eds., The Complete Works of Shakespeare, (Waltham, Mass.: Ginn, 1971), p. 775 (n.), Shakespeare leaves the location of the scene unspecified. Modern editors usually follow Theobald and Holinshed in making it the Archdeacon of Bangor's house, the note goes on to say, but as likely a place would be Glendower's house.

per, and impatience with others' foibles. Except for the single reference to the Archdeacon, however, there is no more; he remains as ephemeral as the tripartite division of the kingdom he apparently worked so hard to mark out on the map.

The Archbishop of York, only alluded to previously, finally makes an appearance in IV.iv. The entire scene of forty-one lines is given to dialogue between the Archbishop and one Sir Michael, obviously a close confederate and probably a priest.²⁷ York on the eve of Shrewsbury is sending out letters which he says are of the first importance; the implication of the rest of the conversation is that they concern the upcoming battle between Lancastrian and rebel forces. The Archbishop is fearful of the outcome and thus functions as a pointer of subsequent events. He has reason to be fearful, for, as he informs us, thus serving also an expository function, Northumberland, Glendower, and Mortimer will be absent from Shrewsbury. Indeed, the Archbishop himself, although earlier specified by Hotspur as one of the rebels furnishing reason for comfort, is not to be there since he is far in the North on the eve of the battle to be fought near the Welsh border. In 2 Henry IV he will lead

²⁷ The Reader's Encyclopedia of Shakespeare, ed. Oscar James Campbell and Edward G. Quinn (New York: Crowell, 1966), p. 539, identifies Sir Michael as "a friend" of York. Harrison, ed., Complete Works, p. 646 (n.) states that Sir Michael has not been identified but is presumably a priest or knight. Ribner and Kittredge, eds., Complete Works, p. 787 (n.) think he was a priest and cite in support the customary priest's title "Sir."

the rebel forces in person, but here his role is limited to plotting and diplomacy. There is more than a hint of self-serving in the Archbishop, a willingness--as was certainly true of Northumberland--to let Hotspur take all the risk.

For if Lord Percy thrive not ere the King
Dismiss his power, he means to visit us,
For he hath heard of our confederacy,
And 'tis but wisdom to make strong against him.
Therefore make haste. I must go write again
To other friends. And so farewell, Sir Michael.
(IV.iv.36-41)

The Archbishop's absenting himself from Shrewsbury does not necessarily mean that, like Northumberland, he is merely being crafty. In the next play he will prove formidable enough. It does, however, strike a foreboding note to the rebel cause in 1 Henry IV and it serves to emphasize Hotspur's isolation. The tone of the conversation--and subsequent events--show Sir Michael's optimism about Shrewsbury to be misplaced and the Archbishop's fears to be well grounded.

After Shrewsbury the Archbishop provides in his conspiracy and continued opposition a link to the next play. The victorious King Henry intends to strike while the iron is hot:

Then this remains, that we divide our power.
You, Sir John, and my cousin Westmoreland
Toward York shall bend you with your dearest speed,
To meet Northumberland and the prelate Scroop,
Who, as we hear, are busily in arms.
Myself and you, Son Harry, will toward Wales,
To fight with Glendower and the Earl of March.
Rebellion in this land shall lose his sway,
Muting the check of such another day.
And since this business so fair is done,
Let us not leave till all our own be won.
(V.v.34-44)

The irony of Henry's indignation against the "rebellion in this land" does not occur to him here. But to the rebels Henry is still the usurper. They will carry on in Richard's name the rebellion against Henry, fulfilling Carlisle's prophecy and keeping alive in the King's conscience his own part in the troubles of the realm.

A subtle shift has occurred in the emphasis of the play, however, and in the sympathies of the reader. The Richardian-Lancastrian conflict, so balanced in Richard II that choice cannot really be made, is in this play gradually resolved. The Lancastrians, although guilty of Richard's blood, are now the guardians of Respublica. This shift is almost entirely owing to the role of Prince Hal, and the Lancastrian emphasis will intensify as Hal develops further into the ideal prince that he is shown to be in the concluding play of the tetralogy. Shrewsbury takes him a long way toward that ideal stature. Just as Hotspur's excesses had underlined Hal's balance on the one side, Falstaff's excesses in 2 Henry IV will underline it on the other. To the extent that one appreciates Hal's progress, to that extent he comes to sympathize with the Lancastrian cause. The blood of Richard on Pomfret stones gradually fades:

There is more involved in Shakespeare's condemnation of this rebellion than his customary support of the de facto king.

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In selecting for his condemnation an uprising specifically carried on in the dead king's cause, Shakespeare is affirming that in spite of the sin of Richard's deposition, Henry of Lancaster's reign has promoted the good of England and that it must not be opposed because

of its illegal and sinful origin.²⁸

But Richard's blood will cause more civil disorder yet before it finally fades away. The Archbishop of York and Northumberland seem determined on that point. The role of the Archbishop, muted in 1 Henry IV and drowned out by Hotspur, will be enlarged in the next play, 2 Henry IV.

2 Henry IV

In 1 Henry IV the main plot had portrayed the rebellion against King Henry, the subplot the merry antics of Prince Hal and Falstaff among their companions of the Boar's Head Inn. A dominant motif in the Second Tetralogy, the development of Hal into the ideal prince, had begun in 1 Henry IV and was to continue through Part II, reaching its culmination in the last play of the tetralogy, Henry V. In Part I main plot and subplot were united beginning in Act IV, with the main plot, the civil dissension culminating in Hotspur's rebellion, drawing Prince Hal into it and furthering his princely development.

In 2 Henry IV, there are again rebellion as ostensible main plot and Falstaffian antics as subplot. The development of Prince Hal and a concomitant of that development, full presentation of what he must cast off before he can become a proper king, comes to dominate the spirit of the play, however, and the structure and emphasis are therefore

²⁸Ribner, p. 166.

different from those of Part I, which had maintained the rebellion as main plot throughout even though Falstaff, through sheer vigor of personality and wit, threatened to take over. In Part II two significant differences of treatment result from the increased emphasis on the development of Hal: first, the rebellion is less central to the action and is concluded earlier in the play than in Part I; second, Falstaff and crew, amusing as they are, are increasingly separated from Prince Hal and are coarsened to emphasize their frivolous if not pernicious nature. The motif of Hal's regeneration, effectively demonstrated as far as martial prowess and chivalric generosity go in the Battle of Shrewsbury, is continued but transformed into a question of Hal's moral and political fitness for the crown. This question dominates the action of 2 Henry IV after IV.iv through the doubts and fears of the embittered and dying king and through the coarsened Falstaff, symbolically separated from Hal--as indeed, he has been both physically and morally for some time--pursuing his larcenies at Justice Shallow's in Gloucestershire. In short, in Part II the theme of rebellion takes second place to the theme of regeneration: regeneration of the stained Lancastrian dynasty through unquestioned exhibition of moral reformation and political fitness for the crown of Prince Hal, who at the end becomes King Henry V.

The leader of the rebel forces in 2 Henry IV is the same Richard Scroop, Archbishop of York, who had figured in the conspiracy against Henry in Part I. He had been absent

from Shrewsbury, as had Northumberland and almost all of the conspirators save Hotspur; and at the close of 1 Henry IV King Henry had detailed Prince John of Lancaster and Westmoreland toward York to encounter the Northern forces, just as the Archbishop had feared and foretold in his conversation with Sir Michael. Part II now begins where Part I had left off in the rebellion, with false rumors of Shrewsbury's being a rebel success quickly corrected, to Northumberland's grief. As pointed out earlier, the balanced sympathy excited by the conflict in Richard II began to shift in 1 Henry IV to the Lancastrian party, despite Henry's usurpation and regicide. The chief factor in the shift was the obvious injury to the kingdom being done by the counter-rebellion against the now established Lancastrian king. Along with that went the symbolic discord among the new rebels, their personal and political failings, and the strong sense that the peace of the realm was more important than the de facto king's wearing a usurped crown. The development of Hal into the hero of Shrewsbury contributed strongly to the shift. Now, in 2 Henry IV, Northumberland's reaction to the news of Shrewsbury--from which battle he had craftily absented himself, as the Induction makes explicit (ll. 36-37)--further audience reaction against the rebels, for Northumberland breaks into an anarchic fury that symbolically sets the tone of the rebellion against the Lancasters:

Let Heaven kiss earth! Now let not Nature's hand
Keep the wild flood confined! Let order die!
And let this world no longer be a stage
To feed contention in a lingering act,

But let one spirit of the firstborn Cain
 Reign in all bosoms, that, each heart being set
 On bloody courses, the rude scene may end,
 And darkness be the burier of the dead!

(I.i.153-60)

That the "lingering act of contention" be brought to an end is desirable for the peace and stability of society; but Northumberland's way of achieving it is too much like Macbeth's. Shakespeare obviously intends this speech to brand the rebel cause in the eyes of his audience as an attack on all order and degree that could prove ruinous to the kingdom.²⁹ It is a poor recommendation for the cause of the Archbishop of York, whose opposition to the Lancasters is cited to bolster Northumberland's hopes. Morton's characterization of the Archbishop's stand and justification bears quoting in entirety:

And, my most noble lord,
 I hear for certain, and do speak the truth,
 The gentle Archbishop of York is up
 With well-appointed powers. He is a man
 Who with a double surety binds his followers.
 My lord your son had only but the corpse,
 But shadows and the shows of men, to fight.
 For that same word, 'rebellion,' did divide
 The action of their bodies from their souls,
 And they did fight with queasiness, constrained,
 As men drink potions, that their weapons only
 Seemed on our side. But for their spirits and souls,
 This word, 'rebellion,' it had froze them up
 As fish are in a pond. But now the Bishop
 Turns insurrection to religion.
 Supposed sincere and holy in his thoughts,
 He's followed both with body and with mind,
 And doth enlarge his rising with the blood
 Of fair King Richard, scraped from Pomfret stones;
 Derives from heaven his quarrel and his cause;
 Tells them he doth bestride a bleeding land,

²⁹Tillyard, Shakespeare's History Plays, p. 295. See also Robert L. Kelly, "Shakespeare's Scroops and the 'Spirit of Cain,'" Shakespeare Quarterly, 20 (Winter 1969), 75.

Gasping for life under great Bolingbroke;
And more and less do flock to follow him.
(I.i.187-209)

Morton's explanation of the reason for Hotspur's defeat is interesting in view of the fact that such a reason apparently never occurred to Hotspur himself.³⁰ Of course, Hotspur had mistakenly apprehended the nature and meaning of his rebellion on both the moral and political level. On the sheer military level likewise he was shown as under-armed and undermanned. Morton now seeks to reassure Northumberland on both points, particularly the first.

In view of the prophecy of Carlisle and the Richardian position of the divine right of kings and the fate of usurpers, an important question in 2 Henry IV is what attitude Shakespeare intends his audience to take toward the rebel pretensions, especially the Archbishop of York's "turning insurrection to religion." In the final analysis, even more strongly than in 1 Henry IV, the rebels against Henry must be regarded as pernicious disturbers of the peace of the realm. This conclusion is intimated in Morton's characterization of the Archbishop in the long discourse just quoted (I.i) and strengthened by the Archbishop's speeches and actions in the several episodes in which he appears in person: I.iii, in which the Archbishop and his supporters plan their strategy; and IV.i and IV.ii, in which the Arch-

³⁰Ruth Leila Anderson, Elizabethan Psychology and Shakespeare's Plays (New York: Russell and Russell, 1927), pp. 157-58, notes in connection with Morton's explanation the importance in Elizabethan psychology of unity in the orderly function of any body, organic or social.

bishop, now at Gaultree with his army, first parleys with Westmoreland and then with Prince John of Lancaster, being tricked by the latter into dismissing his forces and thus resolving the rebellion part of the plot.

Morton's speech on the Archbishop contains several indications in sentiment and phraseology of the new rebels' guilty position. Most obvious is Morton's fastening on the advantages given the rebellion by its being headed by a Churchman. His stressing this smacks not of comfort in religion but rather of comfort in the Archbishop's political utility. If the rebellion were indeed a just one, then the leader would not matter; he might as well be Northumberland. But, as Morton points out, men will follow the Archbishop with both body and mind, making them better fighters. A phrase of Morton's also contributes to the general tone of expediency rather than of principle in his rejoicing over the Archbishop's leadership: "Supposed sincere and holy in his thought. . ." (I.i.202). The Archbishop's sincerity and holiness in Morton's mind are apparently either questionable or, more likely, irrelevant. This speech, coming so soon after Northumberland's appeal to the spirit of Cain and indeed being used to bolster Northumberland's faltering spirit does not have the effect on the reader it is intended to have for Northumberland.

The Archbishop himself appears in I.iii where he, Hastings, Mowbray, and Bardolph enter discussing the rebellion.³¹

³¹Arthur Colby Sprague, Shakespeare and the Actors: The

His opening words may be considered significant in terms of the question of authorial attitude toward the justice of his cause:

Thus have you heard our cause and known our means.
 And, my most noble friends, I pray you all
 Speak plainly your opinions of our hopes.
 And first, Lord Marshal, what say you to it?
 (I.iii.1-4)

The exposition of the Archbishop's cause has thus occurred before the scene opens; the rest of it is almost entirely a discussion of the means. Shakespeare's silence concerning the cause might be taken as dismissal of its moral force; the rebel efforts will be concentrated on the dramatic conflict exhibited in the means. These the other conspirators discuss at length, the Archbishop making only two comments, the first on the danger of not having Northumberland's forces on hand before moving and the second an assertion that the King's divided forces cannot be united to face the rebels. These two remarks indicate a certain amount of political and military shrewdness but nothing about the Archbishop's attitude toward the justice of his cause. How-

Stage Business in His Plays (1660-1905) (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1945), p. 92, notes an attempt on the part of Kemble to give more drama to this scene by having the conspirators discovered, seated, then rising as the Archbishop begins. "But," says Sprague, "I have found little business concerning these distinctly unexciting characters." Evans, pp. 93-94, likewise finds the historical scenes somewhat flat: "One seems aware of a conscious effort by Shakespeare to warm up the language of the historical scenes as if his imagination was being denied that easy service upon which he was so often able to call. So in the speech of the Archbishop [at the close] rhetoric, which is effective but somewhat forced, has a spirit which much of these early scenes do not possess."

ever, his speech that concludes the scene (except for one line each by Mowbray and Hastings) does show a great deal of his attitude toward the continued rebellion:

Let us on,
 And publish the occasion of our arms.
 The commonwealth is sick of their own choice,
 Their overgreedy love hath surfeited.
 A habitation giddy and unsure
 Hath he that buildeth on the vulgar heart.
 O thou fond many, with what loud applause
 Didst thou beat Heaven with blessing Bolingbroke
 Before he was what thou wouldst have him be!
 And being now trimmed in thine own desires,
 Thou, beastly feeder, art so full of him
 That thou provokest thyself to cast him up.
 So, so, thou common dog, didst thou disgorge
 Thy glutton bosom of the royal Richard.
 And now thou wouldst eat thy dead vomit up,
 And howl'st to find it. What trust is in these times?
 They that when Richard lived would have him die
 Are now become enamored on his grave.
 Thou that threw'st dust upon his goodly head
 When through proud London he came sighing on
 After the admired heels of Bolingbroke,
 Criest now 'O earth, yield us that king again,
 And take thou this!' Oh, thoughts of men accursed!
 Past and to come seems best, things present, worst.
 (I.iii.85-109)

The entire speech has been quoted because of its importance in showing the Archbishop's view of himself and the rebels and his view of the present state of the kingdom. First of all the kingdom is viewed as being sick, a view rendered most concretely and effectively through the vivid gastric imagery. A clear implication is that the Archbishop sees his cause as healer of that sickness. Later, in IV.i, he will reiterate the sickness theme but will qualify his placing himself in the role of healer: "I take not on me here as a physician" (IV.i.60). Instead he will stress grievances which the Lancasters must correct. His unsure idea of ex-

actly what his intentions are, and should be, cloud the rebel cause--as Shakespeare intended that it be clouded. Moreover, the Archbishop's disgust at shifting loyalties may be taken as a comment on his own dissension. He was true to the former king--but that king is no more. The disease of the land includes the Archbishop himself.

The Archbishop's bid to present his own party as physicians come to apply a purge to the country's sickness is the sort of delusion to which self-blinded rebels are often liable. The true physician could only be a man who, whatever the outward appearance of things, had never really been sick.³²

His expressed motive is a desire to serve his country, but his violent attack on the commonwealth belies real love for it,³³ and his lack of any faith in the people of the country--fickle as they have been--is inconsistent with his own actions to stir up the people to rebellion. Such contradictions and ill-understood aims and purposes will inevitably result in defeat.³⁴ The Archbishop needs something of the spirit of the Bastard as expressed at the close of King John under circumstances that had been as dismaying as those which the Archbishop professes to see about him. Indeed, Shakespeare may have intended a comment on the Archbishop's attitude by making the succeeding scene to this speech a comic one on the streets of London, with the Hostess--a representative of a major stratum of the commonwealth if there

³² Reese, The Case of Majesty, p. 292.

³³ Kelly, pp. 75-76.

³⁴ Traversi, Shakespeare from "Richard II" to "Henry V," p. 116.

ever was one--appealing to that very English justice which Scroop denies exists. In answer to the Archbishop's question "What trust is in these times?" (1. 100) and his despairing "Past and to come seems best, things present, worst" (1. 109), Dame Quickly and the Chief Justice provide in their differing ways a symbolic affirmation of trust in response to the question and denial of the pessimism of the sentiment.³⁵

The Archbishop is specifically alluded to several times in the interval between his justification of rebellion in I.iii and his appearance at Gaultree Forest with an army in IV.i. The first is Gower's reporting to the Chief Justice what readers and viewers had learned would happen at the end of 1 Henry IV: Prince John is leading an army against Northumberland and the Archbishop. The second is Northumberland's willing capitulation to the pleas of his wife and daughter-in-law, Hotspur's widow, to shun battle against the King's forces. The personification Rumor had noted in the Induction Northumberland's lying at home "crafty-sick" while his son hazarded all at Shrewsbury; Northumberland is shown again in his by now customary vacillation and inaction:

Fain would I go to meet the Archbishop,
But many thousand reasons hold me back.
I will resolve for Scotland. There am I
Till time and vantage crave my company.
(II.iii.65-68)

One recalls the fate of Hotspur. With such allies, not only

³⁵Noted in Tillyard, Shakespeare's History Plays, pp. 300-301.

the success but also the cause of the Archbishop is suspect. The third is by King Henry, sleepless and haunted by the past, discussing affairs of state with Warwick and Surrey. The theme of Lancastrian guilt is reiterated explicitly and forcefully in Henry's musing over the shifting loyalties of Northumberland and recalling Richard's very words in "foretelling this same time's condition." Richard's prophecy of future strife had been correct: "They say the Bishop and Northumberland/ Are fifty thousand strong" (III. i.95-96). Even though Warwick, sanguine and sympathetic, is more accurate in guessing that rumor has doubled the true number, the meaning of the scene lies not in Warwick's optimism, although it will be borne out, but in Henry's unrest and guilt: "And were these inward wars once out of hand,/ We would, dear lords, unto the Holy Land" (III.i. 107-08). The stain on the House of Lancaster lives on.

The dramatic personification of the kind of discord which the Bishop of Carlisle had prophesied would haunt King Henry, the Archbishop of York and his army finally meet the Lancastrian forces at Gaultree Forest. When the armies are within about a mile of each other Prince John's second in command, Westmoreland, appears in the rebel camp in a better than usual confrontation scene. Westmoreland upbraids the Archbishop for departing from his holy calling to take up rebellion, the same breach of personal and civil decorum that Prince John will shortly charge when he and the Archbishop meet. The Archbishop's response to Westmoreland is

much like his justification of rebellion in I.iii: the kingdom is diseased. The Archbishop now denies that he is proposing himself the role of physician to bleed the land, but rather makes his show of war "To diet rank minds sick of happiness/ And purge the obstructions which begin to stop/ Our very veins of life" (IV.i.64-66).³⁶ The distinction between the two kinds of purging is not made entirely clear. Unlike his previous diagnosis of the disease in I.iii, however, in which he had used disgustingly vivid imagery to attack the fickleness of the commonwealth, here the Archbishop brings in a new and reasonable sounding complaint and remedy. He and his followers have been denied access to the King, their grievances unheard. The Archbishop gives earnest of the last statement by producing articles stating the rebels' griefs. He appears truthful and sincere. (The complaints may, of course, be unreasonable; we are never allowed to know.) When Westmoreland denies the charge of grievances unheard, in a garbled passage the Archbishop makes a rejoinder about his brother and the commonwealth or his brother general, the commonwealth: "My brother general, the commonwealth,/ To brother born a household cruelty,/ I make my quarrel in particular" (IV.i.94-

³⁶Jorgensen, p. 189, points to this passage as representing a contemporary idea: "Consonant with the notion of peace as a disease, the corrective work of war is viewed as a therapy." He goes on to quote Sir William Cornwallis on war as a remedy of a state sick of too much ease and tranquility and suggests that the Archbishop appears to hold that idea.

96).³⁷ Westmoreland and Mowbray argue about what might have been had King Richard not stopped the fight between Mowbray's father and Bolingbroke long before. This exchange, with its raking-up of grievances going back to Richard II, serves to underline the dissension that has characterized Henry IV's entire reign and confirms--although in a different way from what the Archbishop means--the present disease of England. For one symptom of the disease is the Archbishop's rebellion itself:

From disease and the age-stricken impotence of Northumberland to the weary fatalism expressed by Henry is as easy step, and so the infirmity of which rebellion is the external symptom is connected at every point with the disharmony between man and circumstances, the contrast between action and stagnation, which dominates the unfolding of events.³⁸

The Archbishop is now perfectly willing to accept peace provided that his grievances are redressed, despite Mowbray's reservations, and sends Westmoreland back to Prince John to tell him so.

Prince John's first address to the Archbishop is cu-

³⁷Harrison, ed., The Complete Works, p. 680 (n.), states that most editors suspect that something has been left out of these much-annotated lines. They may refer to the Archbishop's brother mentioned in 1 Hen. IV I.iii.270. He, it will be recalled, was one of Richard's supporters in Richard II and his execution was mentioned by Worcester as being resented by the Archbishop to the extent that the latter might become an active opponent of Henry IV. Since these lines and the reference in 1 Henry IV are the only references in the Henry the Fourth plays to the Archbishop's executed brother, it is difficult to accept Stevenson's statement that the Archbishop's "reasons for revolt are rarely lifted above private revenge for the death of his brother" (p. 11).

³⁸Traversi, Shakespeare from "Richard II" to "Henry V," pp. 139-40.

riously like Westmoreland's, as if Shakespeare wished to double the force of the rebuke.³⁹ The Archbishop's response is different, however. We hear no more of the sickness of the commonwealth or of the Archbishop's duty to cure it; instead, he stresses his grievances and his willingness to submit if they are redressed. He does make one reference to the state of the nation, but it is subdued and apologetic:

I am not here against your father's peace,
But, as I told my Lord of Westmoreland,
The time misordered doth, in common sense,
Crowd us and crush us to this monstrous form,
To hold our safety up.⁴⁰

(IV.ii.31-35)

The Archbishop's response to the demands of Prince John is in one respect dignified beyond previous presentation. The dignity of his position results from its apparent reasonableness. He has grievances and he wishes redress for them. This favorable impression is qualified and finally outweighed, however, by his previous actions and speeches and by the fact that he has an army at his back. Redress of grievances had not been the main theme of his response to Westmoreland, although he had mentioned it; rather, he had stressed the disease of the realm. And in his justifica-

³⁹Lothian, pp. 29-30, sees it as a "character" which might be headed "A Rebel Bishop."

⁴⁰Whitaker, Shakespeare's Use of Learning, p. 162, thinks that the Archbishop is intended to recognize his actions as real rebellion, despite his denials, in the phrase "this monstrous form," since "for an Elizabethan monstrous means contrary to nature as well as having its modern force."

tion of rebellion to his confederates in I.iii that same disease had been the sole theme. Moreover, Morton's explanation of the Archbishop's motives and actions in I.i hardly squares with the latter's demands of Prince John; for Morton had stressed the deposition issue:

And doth enlarge his rising with the blood
Of fair King Richard, scraped from Pomfret stones;
Derives from heaven his quarrel and his cause;
Tells them he doth bestride a bleeding land,
Gasping for life under great Bolingbroke. . . .
(I.i.204-08)

The Lancastrian sympathies which the Henry the Fourth plays are designed to build up are thus not destroyed by the Archbishop's change of posture in his encounter with Prince John. They are, however, considerably strained by the manner in which Prince John meets and nullifies the threat posed by the rebels.

Prince John, after greeting the three rebel principals by name when he first entered, had immediately launched into a scolding of the Archbishop, and had gone from him to Hastings. Westmoreland has to call the Prince's attention back to the business at hand, asking him to answer the rebels' articles. A strong implication here and many other places in the Gaultree episode is that Westmoreland and Prince John had previously planned and agreed upon their strategy, anticipating the rebels' reactions and capitalizing upon them to the fullest. Prince John, as if cued by Westmoreland to a previously agreed-upon step which in his anger he had forgotten, appears to accede to the demands in a way that is pleasing and accep-

table to the Archbishop:

I like them all, and do allow them well. . . .

 My lord, these griefs shall be with speed redressed,
 Upon my soul, they shall. If this may please you,
 Discharge your powers unto their several countries,
 As we will ours. And here between the armies
 Let's drink together friendly and embrace,
 That all their eyes may bear those tokens home
 Of our restored love and amity.

(IV.ii.54; 59-65)

When Prince John's entire plan is considered, the Archbishop's elation over the peace is pathetic; and it must be admitted that in a pro-Lancastrian play and tetralogy Prince John and Westmoreland at Gaultree do much to qualify the Lancastrian sympathies built up. Hotspur's excesses and Hal's heroism had furthered them effectively in Part I, and Northumberland and the Archbishop earlier in Part II had clearly shown that the Lancasters, despite the stain on their line, represented the best hope for concord and order in the realm. But Prince John's deviousness is hard to take. Westmoreland's responses, especially, are grimly ironic. When the Archbishop drinks to him, Westmoreland says, "But my love to ye/ Shall show itself more openly hereafter" (IV.ii.75-76). To the Archbishop's "I do not doubt you" Westmoreland shoots back, "I am glad of it." No doubt he is; the rebel army has not yet quite dispersed. The following passage demonstrates Shakespeare's irony and quick turns of thought and characterizes both duper and duped. Westmoreland now turns to Mowbray and wishes him health. He is obviously enjoying himself in his superior knowledge of the situation.

Mowb. You wish me health in very happy season,
 For I am, on the sudden, something ill.
Arch. Against ill chances men are ever merry,
 But heaviness foreruns the good event.
West. Therefore be merry, Coz, since sudden sorrow
 Serves to say thus, 'Some good thing comes
 tomorrow.'
Arch. Believe me, I am passing light in spirit.
Mowb. So much the worse, if your own rule be true.
 (IV.iii.79-86)

The rebel army on instructions from Hastings goes home; the Lancastrian forces, despite orders from Westmoreland to disband, remain firm. Their orders were to wait for Prince John's commands, another indication that the Prince and Westmoreland had well rehearsed their strategy. The rebellion is thus peacefully concluded and bloodless--save for the blood of the principals, who are immediately arrested for high treason. Prince John's response to the Archbishop's "Will you thus break your faith?" is a masterpiece of equivocation:

I pawned thee none.
 I promised you redress of these same grievances
 Whereof you did complain, which, by mine honor,
 I will perform with a most Christian care.
 But for you, rebels, look to taste the due
 Meet for rebellion and such acts as yours.

 God, and not we, hath safely fought today.
 Some guard these traitors to the block of death,
 Treason's true bed and yielder-up of breath.
 (IV.ii.112-17; 121-23)

Thus ends the rebellion.

The play, of course, has virtually two more acts to go. As pointed out earlier, the rebellion, although ostensibly forming the main plot, is not the main question of the play at all; the important part in both play and tetralogy is the development of Prince Hal from apparent

wastrel into ideal prince. The rebellion is the last gasp of military opposition to the Lancastrians, and the play now turns to the important question of whether they can surmount the moral blot of regicide by the father and apparent regal unfitness by the father's heir. They will overcome both in the person of Henry V.

Henry V

The development of Prince Hal from apparent madcap wastrel to ideal king and national hero, one of the dominant themes of the Second Tetralogy, is fulfilled in the last play of the series, Henry V. In Richard II Bolingbroke had initiated the question of Hal's conduct by enquiring of his "unthrifty son," castigating him as a "plague" and decrying his choice of companions (V.iii.1-12). Yet, in a prophetic vein the disappointed father professed to see ". . . some sparks of better hope, which elder years/ May happily bring forth" (V.iii.21-22). Despite the King's continued fears in 1 and 2 Henry IV, in the former play Prince Hal demonstrates his military prowess at Shrewsbury and in the latter his moral and political fitness to rule by casting off his unworthy companions. Now, in Henry V, the young king is ready to prove the truth of these earlier indications of his real nature, to fulfill his father's prophecy of "sparks of better hope" which lay

under the surface of his exterior irresponsibility. To demonstrate the fact of this total reform, Shakespeare uses two clerics and a crucial political situation in the beginning of this "patriotic hymn"⁴¹ that presents Shakespeare's first portrait of a hero-king.

The play opens with a Chorus lamenting the narrow limits of the stage for presentation of such grand events as are to come and asking the audience to supply the action with proper imaginative accompaniment. Shakespeare does not depend solely upon audience thought to speed and piece out his story, however; he takes pains to begin on a crucial note, with Canterbury and Ely discussing the proper way to go about protecting the property of the Church from secular threats and hinting of a French war soon:

Cant. My lord, I'll tell you--that self bill is urged
Which in the eleventh year of the last king's
reign
Was like and had indeed against us passed
But that the scrambling and unquiet time
Did push it out of further question.
Ely. But how, my lord, shall we resist it now?
Cant. It must be thought on.⁴²
(I.i.1-7)

In accord with the reformation theme, the two church-

⁴¹Stauffer, p. 100.

⁴²Evans, p. 69, favorably contrasts the opening of this play and the general speed of the first act with what he terms the "dreary and overplayed" narrative and classical similes of the Henry the Sixth plays. Even the duldest speech, Canterbury's rehearsal of Henry's claim to the French throne, he thinks would be more interesting to Shakespeare's contemporaries than to a modern audience. "It stands as an exception for elsewhere the images, with a quick iridescent brightness, illuminate the action."

men see hope for their ecclesiastical problem in the King's new rectitude: "The King is full of grace and fair regard," Canterbury points out; Ely seconds with, "And a true lover of the Holy Church" (I.i.22-23). Canterbury goes into a paean of praise of this new side of the king. Henry is a scholar, skilled alike in divinity, politics, war--a paragon of princes and men. This speech is intended to give authority for the existence of the princely virtues which, save for Shrewsbury and the rejection of Falstaff, the audience has not yet seen. Some of the spectators may have been unfamiliar with the Henry the Fourth plays, and it is important that Henry's character be established early. It will not develop in Henry V, as it had earlier; instead it will be demonstrated in the action. Its key-note is struck here to avoid uncertainty.⁴³

Not all uncertainty is avoided among critics, despite Canterbury's fulsome praise and Henry's subsequent demonstration of political and military genius, not to mention the preparation for the new Henry of the Henry the Fourth plays. As John Dover Wilson observes, ever since Hazlitt ". . . stigmatized Shakespeare's hero as a brute and a hypocrite, Henry has been a subject of debate among crit-

⁴³ Reese, The Cease of Majesty, p. 322, observes in this connection that spectators of the Henry the Fourth plays would know the change was not sudden or unpremeditated. "But there is no reason why the two bishops should have known it too, and their assumption of a heaven-sent conversion is an effective and economical way of emphasizing the reputation that Henry now enjoys."

ics."⁴⁴ Viewed in the context of both tetralogies and this play, however, it seems clear that Shakespeare intends King Henry to represent an ideal of justice, vigor, and wisdom that had been lacking in previous royal portraits. Richard II and Henry VI had been weak, ineffectual monarchs. Richard III, while vigorous enough, had been a tyrant. Henry V has legitimacy of succession, lack of which had clouded the reigns of both his father and, much earlier in history, John. The combination of royal virtue and royal right is unique among Shakespeare's presentations of English rulers up to this point and produces in this play a unique king. Canterbury's eulogy is to be taken straight; and the Archbishop thus functions as spokesman of a dominant theme of the play.

If the Archbishop on Henry's virtues must be taken seriously, his eulogy may yet be incidental in Scene i to a question of more immediate moment to the two clerics, the threat to ecclesiastical revenue. What does this concern show of the character of the two clerics? Does it not show a grasping materialism unworthy of holy fathers? Does their idea to forestall the Parliamentary bill by making an offer of a larger sum than ever before granted a king, the grant to be used in France, not show a cynical manipulation of the King outstripping even their possible material-

⁴⁴ John Dover Wilson, "Introduction," King Henry V (Cambridge, Eng.: The University Press, 1947), p. xv. In a note Wilson lists the main English-speaking contra and pro voices in this debate.

ism? As in the question of Henry's transformation, critical opinion is divided on this point, tending to take the same attitude toward the sincerity of the clerics as toward Henry's sincerity. Thus, to some readers, "The evident servility of the prelate ends by casting an indefinable reservation on the very reformation he is describing."⁴⁵ The question undoubtedly is a legitimate one in Scene i. It is not completely answered there, but later events shape an answer in line with the dominant idea of the play. If Henry's sincerity cannot be doubted, then the role of the two churchmen, particularly Canterbury, in urging him on to the course which he takes, tends to be vindicated. Both questions are raised and answered in Canterbury's disquisition on Henry's rights in France and his response to Henry's searching questions on whether in right and conscience he can make war.

The Archbishop's exposition of the Salic law in Scene ii has been attacked on two grounds, one of them being that it is overlong and tedious,⁴⁶ another that it is a piece of "juridical casuistry."⁴⁷ In truth the speech strikes the modern reader as a particularly dull piece of legal analysis, so much so that in at least one modern

⁴⁵ Traversi, Shakespeare from "Richard II" to "Henry V," p. 167.

⁴⁶ See, for example, Palmer, p. 222; Traversi, Shakespeare from "Richard II" to "Henry V," p. 170; Brandes, p. 205.

⁴⁷ Palmer, p. 222, uses the phrase. His view is supported by Burckhardt, p. 191, Hazlitt, p. 132.

production it has been made comic. In terms of Henry's character and England's right, however, the speech is thematically important. Henry will undertake no unjust war, as his charge to the Archbishop makes clear (I.ii. 9-32).⁴⁸ As for the length of the speech, John Dover Wilson notes that no less than a full presentation would have satisfied Elizabethans:

Few, if any, of the theatre audience would know or care about the names in question; but most would expect to hear the case argued. And the Archbishop argues well. Being constitutionally litigious, Elizabethans loved a good pleader, while it flattered their national pride to hear it proved that France belonged to them.⁴⁹

King Henry is satisfied that "with right and conscience" he can make the claim against France. Canterbury thus functions in the Salic law disquisition as an important motivator of subsequent action, both thematically and dramatically. The question of whether the two prelates for base motives incite Henry to war, or whether he manipulates them in a subtle power play to tell him what he wants to hear, seems best resolved by the view that all principals in Act I demonstrate the unity demanded of a nation that at last has a legitimate king who will vigorously prosecute England's right abroad and justice at home. In these two transcendent matters Henry V is a most refreshing change from the other kings of the English history plays. Doubts

⁴⁸Campbell, Shakespeare's "Histories," pp. 263-69, discusses an Elizabethan precedent for such an action.

⁴⁹Wilson, "Introduction," p. xxiv.

as to the patriotic motives of all concerned in Henry V would hardly square with the rest of the play or with its relationship to the preceding plays. As Reese points out in defending both clerics and Henry, it is unlikely that Shakespeare would wreck his play in the first ten minutes.⁵⁰ The happy combination of both religion and pedigree meet in the Archbishop's justification of the claim on France.⁵¹

The view that Canterbury is to be taken seriously as motivator and moral justifier of subsequent action of the play is given further support in his oration drawing an analogy between the Commonwealth and the honeybees. Almost all critics are in agreement that this speech is intended to represent Shakespeare's own conception of the ideal state.⁵² In response to Exeter's analogy of good government and music which, "Put into parts, doth keep in one consent,/ Congreeing in a full and natural close" (I. ii.181-82), Canterbury draws an even more elaborate analogy of the kingdom and a beehive, stressing the harmonious working of all degrees and obedience of the parts to the demands of the whole:

⁵⁰ Reese, The Cease of Majesty, pp. 323-24.

⁵¹ Fitch, pp. 119-20. Campbell, Shakespeare's "Histories," p. 260, like Fitch, Reese, John Dover Wilson and other "pro-Henry" critics, finds no irony in the Archbishop's justification.

⁵² For a dissenting view on the Archbishop's picture of harmony and order as being an ideal one, see Hazlitt, p. 136. Qualifications of the idea that the analogy represents Shakespeare's ideal are stated in Rabkin, p. 99, and Harbage, pp. 112-13.

Therefore doth Heaven divide
 The state of man in diverse functions,
 Setting endeavor in continual motion.
 To which is fixed, as an aim or butt,
 Obedience. For so work the honeybees,
 Creatures that by a rule in nature teach
 The act of order to a peopled kingdom.
 (I.ii.183-89)

Just as Canterbury's earlier speeches had served to justify a French war if such was necessary to secure England's rights there, so does this speech announce the national unity that must underlie effective and orderly government. The play goes on to demonstrate the kind of national unity envisioned by Canterbury, a unity and obedience to high social aims that will bring England glory unknown under earlier Shakespearean kings. Canterbury thus functions in another important thematic capacity, in addition to pointing up Henry's reformation and providing him with moral justification for the French war.

A curious incident in II.ii links this play with the earlier plays of the Second Tetralogy and provides an example of Henry's political sagacity and even but firm justice. Although not connected directly with the clerics of this play, it connects with the Scroops of Richard II and the Henry the Fourth plays and thus with the rebellion against Henry IV in which the Archbishop of York had figured so prominently. The incident is Henry's discovery and exposure of the three traitors Cambridge, Scroop, and Grey, who had been suborned to murder the king. There is a grim humor in Henry's method of announcing the discovery. First he asks the three what he should do about a prisoner who

had been taken up for railing against the king while drunk. Henry advocates mercy but the counsellors urge severity, even death. As Henry points out a few minutes later, after giving them what they thought would be commissions but which are indictments for treason, they must not for shame ask for mercy, having already fixed the price of treason themselves. Nor do they; they are content to suffer the just penalty. Against Scroop in particular Henry is reproachful, for the two had been close:

But, oh,
What shall I say to thee, Lord Scroop? thou cruel,
Ingrateful, savage, and inhuman creature!
Thou that didst bear the key of all my counsels,
That knewst the very bottom of my soul. . . .
(II.ii.93-97)

This Scroop, although the play does not say so, is the nephew of the Archbishop of York whom Henry IV had beheaded for treason and is thus the final representative of Richardian loyalty in the Second Tetralogy.⁵³ His end is one more example of the Lancastrian emphasis of the plays in this group and gives Henry an opportunity to exhibit his ideal personal and royal nature yet once more in the theme of self-control which runs through his reproach of Scroop:

Oh, how hast thou with jealousy infected
The sweetness of affiance! Show men dutiful?
Why, so didst thou. Seem they grave and learned?
Why, so didst thou. Come they of noble family?
Why, so didst thou. Seem they religious?
Why, so didst thou. Or are they spare in diet?

⁵³ Kelly, p. 73 (n.), summarizes the lives of the Scroops who figure in the Second Tetralogy. They are consistently of the "party of discord," he affirms.

Free from gross passion or from mirth or anger,
 Constant in spirit, not swerving with the blood,
 Garnished and decked in modest compliment. . . ?

.
 Such and so finely bolted didst thou seem.
 And thus thy fall hath left a kind of blot,
 To mark the full-fraught man and best indued
 With some suspicion. I will weep for thee,
 For this revolt of thine, methinks, is like
 Another fall of man.

(I.ii.126-34; 137-42)

Henry's discourse thus reaches back to the remark of the Archbishop that Henry had ". . . whipped the offending Adam out of him" (I.i.29), as Scroop had not, dwells upon the theme of obedience and order which Canterbury's discourse on proper government had presented, and resolves all political difficulties at home so that the play can get on to its real subject, the conquest of France. The civil discord in which the Scroops had figured so strongly throughout the tetralogy is now at an end; Henry heads a united nation. King, Church, nobility, commons, and the people are of one voice and purpose. On this note Shakespeare ends his plays on English history except for the late and untypical Henry VIII.

Henry VIII

With Henry V Shakespeare rounds out his study of England's vicissitudes and triumphs from the deposition of Richard to the accession of Henry Richmond, grandfather of the revered Elizabeth. In the middle of the two tetralogies which had presented all this, Shakespeare had gone far back in history to present a king in conflict with Rome.

King John in the present study is seen as the struggle of a less than ideal monarch against outside forces which would destroy England's independence and sovereignty, and as such another affirmation of patriotic concern with England's national identity which informs all the English history plays. In order of composition Henry V was Shakespeare's final word on the subject for over a decade, a period which saw him turning his energies toward tragedy and a new kind of comedy, abandoning English history as a vehicle for political analysis.

One more play on English history was forthcoming late in Shakespeare's career, however, a play which, like King John, was to feature a powerful and wily cardinal in opposition to a king of England. Unlike Pandulph in King John, the cardinal was to represent no real threat to national sovereignty, and he further was to suffer a fall which left no doubt as to who was in control of English matters of state. Moreover, he was to be balanced against a loyal cleric who both in his life and doctrine was to signify the supremacy of the English crown in all English affairs, including the ecclesiastical. From the standpoint of the handling of clerics, Henry VIII is the clearest illustration among the English history plays of the principle that the interests of Respublica transcend all other considerations.⁵⁴

⁵⁴As stated early in this study, the First Folio is used as authority for the Shakespeare canon. It should be noted, however, that Henry VIII is especially subject to authorship questions. In addition, as a history play it is late and untypical, so that conclusions drawn from it re-

The role of clerics in the action of Henry VIII is extensive, clerics being the focus of two of the four main incidents around which the plot revolves. Wolsey's fall and Cranmer's near fall are two of the four main episodes in the plot and action, the falls of Buckingham and Queen Katherine being the other two. Wolsey has an important hand in the latter two, and Cranmer, rescued from his enemies by Henry, ends the play with his famous prediction at the baptism of the infant Elizabeth of English greatness under the Virgin Queen and her successor James I. Cranmer's prophecy thus symbolically points toward a glorious conclusion to the turbulent events of England's past. The healing note, which Shakespeare had struck in concluding plays of the two tetralogies, is struck again. If regarded as the culmination of Shakespeare's survey of English history, Henry VIII is an end rather than a chapter because of its look through future events to the Golden Age of Shakespeare's own present. In this light the place of the play among the English histories is an important one, the others having been moving toward the grand culmination of English history in the Age of Elizabeth prophesied by Cranmer at the end.

The seriousness of the play is evident from the opening words:

I come no more to make you laugh. Things now
That bear a weighty and a serious brow,
Sad, high, and working, full of state and woe,

garding Shakespeare's presentation of character, theme and dramatic artistry are more tentative than with any other play in this study.

Such noble scenes as draw the eye to flow,
We now present.

(Prol. 1-5)

The role of Wolsey in the conflict is introduced early. As Norfolk describes the gorgeous pageantry of the Field of the Cloth of Gold, contrived by Wolsey, Buckingham complains of the Cardinal's ambition and vanity, a complaint the truth of which the play fully demonstrates. The first major plot movement is Buckingham's fall, and his chief antagonist is Wolsey; the conflict between the pair dominates the action and dialogue of Act I. In the first scene of Act II Buckingham is shown as already tried, convicted, and sentenced to the block, completing the first major episode in the series of falls which form the action of the play. Act I introduces other elements of conflict, however, which have important bearing on subsequent events. Queen Katherine is shown in I.ii championing the people in their complaint against an unjust and oppressive tax levied by the Cardinal, and, later in the scene, expressing skepticism at the charges against Buckingham. The Queen thus comes in conflict with the Cardinal early, although Henry remains for a time convinced of Wolsey's loyalty and ability. In the concluding scene (I.iv) a most fateful event occurs at a revelry at Wolsey's house--the King meets Anne Bullen. Thus, to perceptive viewers, Act I prepares the way for the falls of both Buckingham and Katherine. Nor can Wolsey be far behind, since in Shakespeare's plays such wickedness as the Cardinal exhibits from the beginning cannot flourish long.

Wolsey is not the only cleric having a hand in the fall of Buckingham. According to the First Gentleman in II.i, Buckingham was confronted at his trial not only with his surveyor (whose objectivity Queen Katherine had questioned), but also with ". . . Sir Gilbert Peck, his chancellor; and John Car,/ Confessor to him; with that devil monk,/ Hopkins, that made the mischief" (II.i.20-22). Buckingham's lament just before his execution does not mention these by name, but he wishes that those who sought his fall were "more Christians" (II.i.64) and accuses them of falsehood (II.i.104-05). The chief feeling conveyed by Buckingham's fall is pathos.⁵⁵ Wolsey is at the bottom of it, of course, and he will receive his reward, but Buckingham is careful to absolve all the judges and the legal system of any blame. He dies like a gentleman and in all charity with the world, so that the play demonstrates no more criticism of the clerical accusers than it does of Henry himself. Indeed, the tone of Buckingham's fall is medieval--a turn of Fortune's wheel.

Shakespeare maintains the pathetic note in Katherine's fall also, so that it is extremely hazardous to conjecture his personal feelings concerning it. That Katherine is presented as a loving, dutiful, loyal wife and queen is obvious. It is equally obvious that the play avoids direct or implied criticism of Henry in the business. Even if he had

⁵⁵ Frank Kermode, "What Is Shakespeare's Henry VIII About?" Durham University Journal, n.s. 9 (1948), 52.

felt that Henry's divorce was unjust Shakespeare was probably too close to the event to be condemnatory of the father of the beloved Virgin Queen; such might be dangerous, even though Elizabeth had been dead a decade. One may properly conjecture that he was too fair to blacken the unhappy Katherine's reputation. Whatever his feelings, the fact is that he adopted an objective approach in which no personal blame attaches to either King or Queen in the divorce matter.⁵⁶ The play as a whole implies that the divorce was fortunate, since from it came opportunity for a new heir who was to bring in a new Golden Age. Moreover, the Gardiner-Cranmer conflict clearly has the reformer in the right: the judgment of English history was all on Henry's side. Still, Katherine is shown as being a virtual saint, her conduct allowing no grounds for personal reproach.

Not so with Wolsey. Again and again he is shown arranging affairs for his personal gain and for unwarranted power in the kingdom. For example, in the matter of the unjust tax that Katherine had complained of, Wolsey manipulates the King's revocation of it so that the act will seem

⁵⁶ My reading is not universally accepted. Hazlitt, p. 157, wonders how Henry kept from being hooted from the English stage, saying the only thing in his favor in the play is his treatment of Cranmer. Kermode, p. 51, concedes "an element of hypocrisy in the King's character in this part of the play," but maintains that Katherine's continued failure to produce an heir was reason enough in Elizabethan eyes for the annulment. Howard Felperin, "Shakespeare's Henry VIII: History as Myth," Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900, 6 (Spring 1966), 244, sees all of the falls as fortunate because of their spiritually redemptive and reconciliatory nature, bringing good out of evil.

to be his doing (I.ii.105-08). He is shown as being the real master of Bishop Gardiner, the King's newly-appointed secretary (II.ii.119-20). His and Cardinal Campeius's interview with Queen Katherine in her chambers underlines Wolsey's duplicity (III.i), a duplicity which King Henry is forced to recognize in III.ii, when Wolsey's secret correspondence with the Pope is brought to light. Thus Wolsey, like Pandulph, is unmistakably presented as an agent of Rome conspiring against the English crown in a manner that would completely discredit him in the eyes of Englishmen brought up to regard the papacy as a veritable antichrist. His fall, when it finally comes, is the least pathetic of the three. True, his moving farewell to greatness gains him human sympathy, but there is no justification for or mitigation of the enormity of his crimes.⁵⁷ Even Queen Katherine, who is reluctant to speak ill of any man, is convinced by Griffith to relinquish her hatred of Wolsey only after his death and on her own deathbed. The conversation of Katherine and Griffith (IV.ii) is another example of Shakespeare's charac-

⁵⁷Wide differences of opinion on the poetic and dramatic effectiveness of Wolsey's farewell exist. One suspects that the Fletcher problem has a hand in such varying reactions. Hazlitt, p. 155, says that Wolsey's character and "the description of his pride and his fall, are inimitable, and have, besides their gorgeousness of effect, a pathos, which only the genius of Shakespeare could lend to the distresses of a proud, bad man, like Wolsey." Brandes, p. 612, states, "Fletcher has spoiled the character by the introduction of the badly-written monologues uttered by Wolsey after his fall." Halliday, p. 267, maintains: ". . . even today any popularity that Henry VIII may be said to retain lies in Fletcher's pageantry and the protracted farewells of Henry's victims."

teristically careful balancing of good against evil in his treatment of clerics. Making clear the pride, ambition, and duplicity of the Cardinal, his misuse of both clerical and secular offices, Shakespeare nevertheless redeems him from rank villainy to mere human error. In this play in which no person is painted in completely black colors, even Wolsey, the one most personally and politically culpable, is shown to have redeeming human qualities. Shakespeare's humanity and largeness of soul, always in evidence, are here most clearly demonstrated.

Henry VIII is so constructed that the falls of Buckingham, Katherine, and Wolsey are opposed by corresponding rising figures. Katherine and Wolsey are balanced by Anne and Cranmer, respectively. As a structural principle the gradual emergence of King Henry balances the falls of the others, since the play makes clear that matters of state, centered in Henry as King, necessitate the falls of the others. Bishop Gardiner, Henry's secretary, is in Act V overruled by the King in his plot to undermine Henry's new Archbishop of Canterbury, and Cranmer is saved not only to christen the young princess and to prophesy a new Golden Age of English history, but also to shape religious affairs so that in England "God shall be truly known" (V.v.37). Not much is made of Cranmer's place in the English Reformation, since it was a part of the future and outside the chronological limits of this play, but the implications of his future role are clear enough in his elevation to the

See of Canterbury, his rescue from his enemies by the personal intervention of the King, his being chosen as the new Princess' godfather, and above all, by his speech predicting the future peace and prosperity of the realm under the rule of the lady first being shown to the world. This prophecy provides not only a fitting conclusion to Henry VIII itself, bringing in the idea of regeneration to which the falls of so many principals were preparation, but also to Shakespeare's plays as a whole. For, as Shakespeare's final plays, including this one, demonstrate, life is a regenerative process, the young redeeming the failures of the old. In more specifically historical terms, Cranmer's prophecy effectively rounds out the whole panorama of English history which Shakespeare had treated in ten plays. The long strife of Lancaster and York, brought to an end by the union of the two houses in the Tudors, will finally lead to the reign of the greatest Tudor of them all. And when that good queen dies--as die she must--the succession will not be questioned. There will be no more civil war.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Shakespeare may be excused, in light of his moral and historical vision, from lacking prophetic power to foresee the troubled events of the reign of the second Stuart. His place as the greatest of dramatic poets hardly seems threatened by his not being omniscient.

CHAPTER IV

SOME MANIPULATING FRIARS AND A NOVICE

The Two Gentlemen of Verona

As might be expected in the comedies, which by their very nature are reconciliatory and happy, the clerics in them generally perform functions and fulfill roles in accordance with comic purpose. Such benign functions and roles did not always hold true of the clerics of the English histories, where Shakespeare frequently found himself obliged by tradition to present disagreeable or dissentient figures, notably Cardinal Beaufort of the Henry the Sixth plays and the Archbishop of York of the Henry the Fourth plays. In comedy, however, characters do not suffer for long themselves nor cause others to suffer too long or severely. Usually they are well-meaning; if not, they are usually converted. The two clerics of The Two Gentlemen of Verona, although their functions are few and their roles circumscribed, fit within the spirit of romantic comedy of this play.

One can hardly consider Friar Patrick and Friar Lawrence of Two Gentlemen as characters, for they do not ap-

pear on stage at all. Even though their names are given and their actions are reported by other characters, they function as mere devices of the plot. Friar Patrick is mentioned first. Silvia, having enlisted the aid of Sir Eglamour in her plan to elope to the forest where Valentine is king of the outlaws, plans to meet the former that evening at Friar Patrick's cell, where she "intends confession," a reason for going out that will satisfy the strictest father (IV.iii). In the swift-flowing action of the Elizabethan stage she appears there shortly afterward (V.i) and hurries off to the forest with her helpful friend. Confession must wait. In the following scene, her absence has been discovered and her father has surmised the true happenings:

She's fled unto that peasant Valentine,
 And Eglamour is in her company.
 'Tis true, for Friar Lawrence met them both
 As he in penance wandered through the forest.
 Him he knew well, and guessed that it was she,
 But, being masked, he was not sure of it.
 Besides she did intend confession
 At Patrick's cell this even, and there she was not.
(V.ii.35-42)

The significant thing about all this is the similarity between certain situations and actions here and Romeo and Juliet. In the latter play, the confession cell will provide the same opportunity for escape from a father insisting on his daughter's marriage to the wrong suitor. The confessor, only mentioned here, will be a prime mover in the action. It is not too great a conjecture, perhaps, to identify the Friar Lawrence wandering in penance

through the Mantuan forest with the Friar Laurence of the tragedy, since he could easily feel the need for solitude and penance after the unhappy events at Verona.¹ The two clerics here, therefore, point to later much more important but similar functions. Shakespeare had a good memory for useful details and plot devices.

Romeo and Juliet

As pointed out in the first chapter of this work, Shakespeare's tragedies have relatively few clerical characters compared with either the English histories or the comedies. Only Romeo and Juliet and Hamlet among the tragedies have speaking parts for clerics at all. A logical explanation for this absence lies in the nature of the action of the tragedies and in their settings. Comedy calls for marriage, and clerics are a function of that necessity in Much Ado about Nothing, Taming of the Shrew, and Twelfth Night (Sir Oliver Martext, Touchstone's choice for the officiant in As You Like It, is eschewed for Hymen). Conversely, tragedy, although it may have marriage as a central situation, as in Hamlet and Othello, is not likely to show a happy couple celebrating that

¹T. W. Baldwin, Shakespeare's Five-Act Structure (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1947), p. 764, points out that at the end of Brooke's Romeus and Juliet the friar becomes a hermit in penance. The device of Silvia's escape was likewise suggested by Brooke, he believes. Van Doren, p. 44, and Alexander, p. 72, also point to these and other foreshadowings of Romeo and Juliet in Two Gentlemen.

feast. Nor is it likely to have a cleric as a comic character, as in Love's Labors Lost and The Merry Wives of Windsor. Too, the Roman setting for Titus Andronicus, Julius Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra, and Coriolanus militates against the inclusion of clerics, although Shakespeare uses Aemilia, "an abbess," to very good purpose in what is essentially a Roman play, The Comedy of Errors. Clerics in the English histories, as in the comedies, perform natural and varied functions. But in the tragedies they are in short supply, as might be expected from the nature of that genre.

Two Gentlemen of Verona had pointed toward functions of clerics that are expanded and augmented to such an extent in Romeo and Juliet that Friar Laurence becomes a principal of the play and a prime motivator of the tragic action. Only in Measure for Measure among Shakespeare's plays does a cleric have a more vital plot function. And plot function is only one of the many uses of Friar Laurence; he serves important thematic functions as well. Almost unique among the tragedies, in the plays as a whole save for Cardinal Beaufort Friar Laurence is the most fully presented of all the clerics. In terms of dramatic interest and character development, he easily outstrips the others, even Beaufort, who appears in two plays. He and Friar John together may be said, indeed, to cause the tragedy, although such a statement must immediately be qualified by the recognition that no single action can be

pointed to as sole cause in the web of plot and character that makes up Shakespearean tragedy. But Friar Laurence plays an important part in the unhappy accidents of Romeo and Juliet, and as such is Shakespeare's richest portrayal of a cleric.

He is first seen in II.iii, just after the young lovers declare themselves in the garden scene. The sense of speed that is a strong motif in the play is furthered by the fact that Laurence appears in the early dawn just after Romeo, dawn approaching, announces that he will seek out his "ghostly father." Laurence's speech of thirty lines before Romeo makes his appearance has significant thematic bearing on subsequent action. Having filled "this osier cage of ours/ With baleful weeds and precious-juiced flowers" (II.iii.7-8), Laurence is moved to philosophize on malign and benign virtues of plants and their connection with the dual nature of man:

Oh, mickle is the powerful grace that lies
In herbs, plants, stones, and their true qualities.
For naught so vile that on the earth doth live,
But to the earth some special good doth give;
Nor aught so good but, strained from that fair use,
Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse,
Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied,
And vice sometime's by action dignified.
(II.iii.15-22)

The last two lines may be taken as a statement pointing forward to the crossed purposes and accidents of almost everyone concerned in the tragedy, even Laurence himself. The Friar's discourse on the virtues of the plants links up with his later furnishing the sleeping potion to

Juliet, removing some of its sense of improbability² and serving as dramatic foreshadowing.³ His "osier cage" has been seen as a "unifying symbol for these comic people and events, as well as for the lovers themselves and the bustling world about them . . . ," in the correspondence between the plants and man's moral nature. For a large part of the play either comedy or tragedy is implicit in the action, until the deaths of Mercutio and Tybalt tilt the scales. The Friar's analogy and the paradoxical nature of man are thus at the heart of this play.⁴

All of these implications are in the future as the excited Romeo accosts Laurence with his good news and asks Laurence's help in marrying Juliet. Just as Laurence's soliloquy had made him a chorus for the tragic future, so his conversation with Romeo makes him a pointer toward the theme of haste, of unwise speed, which is a basic motif of the play.⁵ His greeting dwells on Romeo's earliness and quick shifts of feeling; but he agrees to help. Not, however, before he again warns Romeo:

Rom. Oh, let us hence, I stand on sudden haste.
Friar L. Wisely and slow. They stumble that run fast.
 (II.iii.93-94)

²Hazlitt, p. 99.

³Harley Granville-Barker, Prefaces to Shakespeare (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), II, 308.

⁴Douglas Cole, "Introduction," Twentieth Century Interpretations of "Romeo and Juliet," ed. Douglas Cole (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 12.

⁵Brents Stirling, Unity in Shakespearian Tragedy: The Interplay of Theme and Character (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1956), pp. 16-17.

The last clause, coupled with the earlier "stumbling on abuse" (I.iii.20) and pointing toward the later "How oft tonight/ Have my old feet stumbled at graves" (V.iii.121-122), is ominous. But Laurence, like Romeo, is optimistic and happy, for the alliance may heal the quarrel of the two houses.

As in Two Gentlemen of Verona, Juliet obtains permission to go to her confessor for shrift as occasion for achieving her matrimonial plans, the Nurse meanwhile fetching a ladder for Romeo (II.v.74-76). Friar Laurence's words in the marriage scene are few but, as is characteristic of almost all his speeches, full of dramatic irony. He begins, "So smile the Heavens upon this holy act/ That afterhours with sorrow chide us not!" (II.vi.1-2). In response to Romeo's rash defiance of even death if he but be joined to his love, Laurence interjects a warning, more ironic than he can possibly suspect:

These violent delights have violent ends,
And in their triumph die, like fire and powder
Which as they kiss consume. The sweetest honey
Is loathsome in his own deliciousness,
And in the taste confounds the appetite.
Therefore, love moderately, long love doth so,
Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow.
(II.vi.9-15)

Friar Laurence thus attempts to play a "slowing" role with Romeo analogous to the Nurse's role with Juliet,⁶ but his wisdom is no more heeded than is the worldly advice of the Nurse. The young lovers are in no mood for moral maxims.⁷

⁶Stirling, Unity in Shakespearian Tragedy, p. 18.

⁷Granville-Barker, II, 330, notes that, although

The haste of the play is evident even here. The impetuosity of the lovers is humorously recognized in Laurence's desire to make "short work" in incorporating "two in one" before the lovers can be left alone.⁸ They exit for the ceremony, in accordance with Elizabethan convention of not showing marriage on stage.⁹

The ebullient tone of the wedding scene, which prevails over the Friar's maxims, is quickly shattered in the scene which follows. Tybalt kills Mercutio, Romeo kills Tybalt, the Prince banishes Romeo--and the play is tipped from comedy to tragedy. In the second half of III.ii and in III.iii, Juliet and Romeo, respectively, are seen in despair at the turn of events. Romeo, hiding in Laurence's cell, is brought news of his banishment by the sympathetic

Laurence is sympathetic, he is "compact of maxims" and "is just such a picture of an old man as a young man draws, all unavailing wisdom. There is no more life in the character than the story asks or gives; but Shakespeare palliates this dramatic weakness by keeping him shadowed in his cell, a ghostly confessor, a refuge for Romeo, Paris, and Juliet alike, existing--as in their youthful egotism we may be sure they thought--in their interest alone."

⁸P. N. Siegel, "Christianity and the Religion of Love in *Romeo and Juliet*," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 12 (1961), 382-83, points to the "violent delights"--"fire and powder" analogy Friar Laurence draws as capturing the ambivalent feeling the play projects toward the pair's love. It is ecstatic but destructive, and the "kiss"--"die" conjunction suggests the secondary Elizabethan meaning of the latter word.

⁹Sprague, p. 305, in examining the stage business of this scene, notes that Cumberland's edition had Laurence come between the lovers, take a hand of each, and lead them off. In the nineteenth century various "pictorial" effects were tried, one having two monks place hassocks for the bride and groom to kneel on. As usual, Shakespeare knew best.

confessor and friend; the swift action pauses while Romeo, as had Juliet in the previous scene, beweeeps his outcast state.¹⁰ The scene simultaneously allows Friar Laurence to exhibit characteristics of both his person and calling and to move the plot a step further. In illustration of the former, Laurence, as is usual with him, looks on the brighter side. Romeo might have been sentenced to death but is merely banished; for that "dear mercy," which gives the distraught young lover such pain, Friar Laurence has a remedy:

I'll give thee armor to keep off that word,
Adversity's sweet milk, philosophy,
To comfort thee, though thou art banished.
(III.iii.54-56)

A more clear-cut example of the gulf between reason and emotion, the intellect and the heart, age and youth, could hardly be found than Romeo's response to the Friar's well-meant but empty offer: "Yet banished? Hang up philosophy!" (III.iii.57). The delicate scales of sympathy, which Shakespeare usually keeps balanced, tip down here on Romeo's side. Friar Laurence must offer more. Romeo is correct in accusing the Friar of not knowing what he is saying. Soon afterwards, however, Shakespeare tips the scales again in Romeo's attempt at suicide. If Friar Laurence's philosophy is no answer to the young lover's anguish, neither is death. The confessor sternly lectures his

¹⁰Granville-Barker, II, 315, observes: "The mature Shakespeare would not, perhaps, have coupled such similar scenes so closely; but both likeness and repetition serve his present purpose."

charge on his responsibilities as a man.¹¹ More important --and in this he serves to further the plot--he offers hope in banishment: after a time the marriage can be made public, the pardon of the Prince obtained, and the lovers united in a joy intensified by their separation. Thus, again characteristically, the Friar comes up with a plan to meet the current situation, this plan more conjectural and subject to mishap than his original one--to unite the warring houses through marriage--but less desperate than the plan events will shortly force him to broach. Friar Laurence always means well. In this instance he resolves a dramatic dilemma and furnishes an advance in the plot; Romeo, in reversal of mood, is satisfied: "But that a joy past joy calls out on me,/ It were a grief so brief to part with thee./ Farewell" (III.ii.73-75). Given the situation, there is nothing more--nor less--that either could do.¹² Their actions square with the "actual ethical

¹¹The balanced nature of the action here, the tension between two truths, naturally leads to contradictory feelings in the reader. If called upon to make a choice where no choice appears possible, either possibility might emerge. Thus, Whitaker, Shakespeare's Use of Learning, p. 112, emphasizes Romeo's moral culpability here and later: ". . . he is morally responsible for the tragic outcome of the play." On the other hand Traversi, An Approach to Shakespeare, I, 129, emphasizes the paradoxical nature of Laurence's advice: ". . . this judgement, which is the type of many others made in the course of the play, is at once true, needing to be said, and--as seen from the standpoint of the victim--beside the point, uttered by one who cannot, by his very nature, understand what is really at stake." Muriel C. Bradbrook, Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy (Cambridge, Eng.: The University Press, 1935), p. 22, states that Romeo's behavior is not extravagant by Elizabethan standards.

¹²Harold S. Wilson, On the Design of Shakespearian

energy of the drama . . . , its realization of the purity and intensity of ideal love."¹³ Beside this, questions of either the Friar's or Romeo's ethics must take secondary consideration.

As is usual between appearances of Friar Laurence in the action, momentous events occur between his pacification of Romeo on Monday and his next appearance in his cell with first Paris, then Juliet, on Tuesday. Old Capulet has moved for Juliet's marriage to Paris on Thursday. In a scene of terrible violence, because Juliet cannot explain her reluctance, the distraught girl is isolated among family and friends suddenly turned enemies. Even the Nurse, who had been her ally along with Friar Laurence, turns against her, urging Paris as a husband. Only Laurence is left:

Go, counselor.
Thou and my bosom henceforth shall be twain.
I'll to the Friar, to know his remedy.
If all else fail, myself have power to die.
(III.v.239-42)

As in his previous appearance with Romeo, the role of the Friar in IV.i is to comfort Juliet with a plan, this one

Tragedy (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), p. 26, sees a lack of coherent motivation and common sense in Friar Laurence's actions; he should have used the lovers' already being married, as he had announced earlier he would, to bring peace. He does not explain how Tybalt's death could be surmounted. Huhner, pp. 167-68, sees Laurence in an even worse light: he harbors a banished murderer contrary to law and even invites him back. Huhner, like Stevenson, thinks Shakespeare had a low opinion of clerics.

¹³Stauffer, p. 57.

more desperate than the previous. But desperate situations call for desperate remedies, and Juliet clutches eagerly at the hope offered by the sleeping potion.

Critical attitude toward Friar Laurence's proposal of the potion is mixed, ranging from excusing it on the grounds that it was drawn from the source with Shakespeare's "usual indifference to external detail"¹⁴ through accusation of well-intentioned blundering¹⁵ to the charge of outright wickedness.¹⁶ It is true that Laurence's scheme fails and that part, at least, of the failure can be attributed to him. He apparently forgets his promise to communicate with Romeo through Balthazar. But to criticize his plan from hindsight is very different from the tone generated in Laurence's cell by the frightened Juliet, threatening, and fully capable of, self-destruction if no hope is forthcoming, and the concerned, totally involved Friar. Like every action in the play, the Friar's plan seems to be the only recourse possible. If it works out, the potion will produce a situation much like that produced by the potion Oberon used to such good effect in A Midsummer Night's Dream, love triumphant and all discord healed. Friar Laurence can hardly be expected to

¹⁴Brandes, p. 78.

¹⁵Cutts, The Shattered Glass, p. 92.

¹⁶Stevenson, p. 46: "If Laurence can be excused for the precipitancy by later audiences, he nevertheless strayed far out of the bounds of Elizabethan morality when he performed a hasty, unsanctioned marriage and brewed secret potions. A case for his exalted spirituality and virtue can be made only if his cell is relocated in Gretna Green."

know the future.

More important dramatically than the wisdom and ethics of Laurence's new proposal is its role in the plot. Harley Granville-Barker, analyzing the structure, points out that the Friar's speech to Juliet as he gives her the potion and explains his plan is "a sort of strong pillar of rhetoric, from which the play's action is to be swung to the next pillar, the speech (in some ways its counterpart) in which Juliet nerves herself to drinking it."¹⁷ Compared with Juliet's magnificent soliloquy (IV.iii.14-58), almost every other speech in the play appears pale, and the bustling of Capulet in the previous scene (IV.ii) of little dramatic moment. Capulet's great good humor at his daughter's apparent reformation is, of course, ironic, as is his praise of the role of "this reverend holy Friar" (IV.ii.31). Juliet, dissimulation forced on her, dissimulates well. Only when alone can she give vent to her fears.

Dissimulation is likewise forced upon Friar Laurence several scenes later (III.v) when he enters with Paris and musicians just after the drugged Juliet is found. Some critics feel that Laurence fulfills his expected office here too well, that his reproof of the loud mourning and his subsequent lecture on death as eternal life come near cant.¹⁸ And yet, the audience must have felt a sense of

¹⁷Granville-Barker, II, 317.

¹⁸See, for example, Granville-Barker, II, 319.

relief that the fustian rant of the mourning, however sincerely intended, is cut off:

O child! O child! My soul, and not my child!
 Dead art thou! Alack, my child is dead,
 And with my child my joys are buried!
 (IV.v.62-64)

It also helps to recall that, of all the assembled people, only Friar Laurence desires that Juliet have what she wants; everyone else wants her to do his own bidding, even the hapless Paris. Moreover, to the Friar the action is still basically comic, so that he may be excused a little irony at the expense of the exploiters--however well-intentioned, they are exploiters nevertheless--of the unhappy girl. Read in this light, his speech makes more sense than if read as hypocritical role-playing. For example, the Friar could have intended a double meaning in

Oh, in this love, you love your child so ill
 That you run mad, seeing that she is well.
 She's not well married that lives married long,
 But she's best married that dies married young.

That is, the insistent parents, having tried to force an unwanted marriage with Paris upon Juliet and not knowing the real case, that she is already married to Romeo and cannot marry Paris, are running mad with false grief. She is already "best married," had "died" "married young," and joy should be the real reaction to the situation were it rightly understood. Perhaps such an interpretation is strained, but it lies within the Friar's power to take such an attitude as much as to assume a hypocritical stock clerical role and preach an unnecessary sermon on the sor-

row of life and joy of death.¹⁹ That Shakespeare ends the scene with the comic episode of Peter and the musicians shows that the audience is not to take the "death" scene very seriously. Friar Laurence, despite the fact that he must play a certain role not to give the show away, is more in the spirit of the musicians than of the family in the scene.

The seriousness of the action, its tipping toward real tragedy rather than the comedy disguised as a tragedy that Friar Laurence would have, is indicated in the next scene (V.i), where the banished Romeo hears from Balthazar that Juliet is in her tomb. For Romeo the tragedy is now complete, and but one step remains. He shortly after visits the apothecary to obtain the means for that final step. When he asks Balthazar twice whether he has no letters from the Friar, the reader suddenly recalls that Laurence had indeed promised Romeo that he would "find out your man,/ And he shall signify from time to time/ Every good hap to you that chances here" (III.iii.169-71). Later he had promised Juliet he would "send a friar with speed/ To Mantua, with my letter to thy lord" (IV.i.123-24). Laurence has thus neglected the former promise, employing instead the means of communication he later mentioned to Juliet. In V.ii he learns to his horror that Friar John

¹⁹Rabkin, p. 173, is dissatisfied with the Friar's response here, as is almost everyone who comments, but feels that Shakespeare handled the entire situation in this way to make the audience feel the tragedy as Romeo's.

has been prevented from delivering the true nature of the situation in Verona to Romeo in Mantua.²⁰ Unlike the audience, Laurence is unaware of Romeo's desperation and is not sufficiently alarmed. Juliet, who will soon awaken in the tomb, needs comfort, however, and he will hasten there. Like everyone in the play, Laurence too is ignorant and blind. His kind heart is in evidence, as ever, as he thinks of Juliet awakening alone in the tomb, but a kind heart will not be enough. When Friar Laurence is seen again, Paris and Romeo are dead.

The "much danger" that Laurence had anticipated upon learning of the miscarrying of his letter to Romeo is in his mind as he appears in the cemetery in V.iii and encounters Balthazar:

Saint Francis be my speed! How oft tonight
Have my old feet stumbled at graves! Who's there?
(V.iii.121-22)

Straightway a fearful sight greets his eyes--Paris and Romeo dead. At that moment Juliet awakes, and for the first time in the play Laurence has no remedy: "A greater power than we can contradict/ Hath thwarted our intents" (V.iii. 153-54). In panic he entreats Juliet to come away, and when she refuses, runs off alone. Laurence, like the rest,

²⁰All critics whose comment on Friar John I have seen except Stevenson take him as a plot device and see his role in the tragedy as only one of many accidents that befall. Stevenson, p. 35, implies dilatoriness and carelessness, moral culpability: "In the play he escapes from the house in order to return to Verona. Since in the play he could get back to Verona, he was evidently not so fast shut up that he could not have found a way to deliver the letter, had he tried."

is only too human. Juliet is left alone with her prior intention, which Laurence had temporarily stayed with his plan of the potion. Falling upon Romeo's dagger, she joins her husband in death; there will be no "sisterhood of nuns" for her.

The role of Friar Laurence in the tragedy is thus a prime one in the plot structure. He it was who married the lovers, hoping thereby to unite the warring houses. After Romeo killed Tybalt, it was Laurence who reconciled Romeo to banishment, giving him hope of being recalled soon. When the Capulets attempted to force Juliet's marriage with Paris, Laurence came up with the potion plan, whereby Juliet's suicide was averted--for a time. Finally, the miscarriage of his letter to Romeo allowed the youth so to misinterpret the situation at Verona that he committed suicide. From then on, in the context of the love tragedy, what Laurence did made little difference; as it happened, his running away at a noise allowed Juliet opportunity to join Romeo in death. All this, however, is mechanical. Granted Laurence's important plot function, what are we intended to think of him as a man and as a cleric?

The answer lies as much in interpretation of the meaning of the tragic events as in any other single factor. If the play is a tragedy of character, with all the principals responsible in some part because of their precipitancy, then Friar Laurence must assume his share of

the blame in contributing to the tragic march of events. Romeo had only to broach the subject of marriage to Juliet for the Friar to happily accede to its performance. Throughout the play Laurence habitually meets every new situation with a plan to remedy it, increasing the opportunity for fatal error, until finally the almost inevitable error does occur. Laurence could be accused of laxness and carelessness in devising one means of communication with Romeo and using another, the latter failing when the former might have been successful. He might even be accused of tarrying in going to Juliet's tomb; of cowardice when he gets there too late and flees at the noise of the watch; and of an attempt at craven self-exculpation when brought by the watch before the Prince.²¹

Yet all this would miss much of the point of the play and the Friar's real place in it. That the tragedy is rooted in character in part is evident from the many wrong choices made by everyone in the play, particularly the rash young lovers. But as Shakespeare takes great pains to make clear, it is not character but "the stars," unhappy mischance, which is to dominate the rush of events. The impetuosity of the young lovers, the hastily conceived and as hastily executed stratagems to accomplish their ends, the

²¹He has, in fact, been accused of all of these. For a sample of adverse criticism of various actions and character traits see Dowden, p. 107; Roy W. Battenhouse, Shakespearean Tragedy: Its Art and Its Christian Premises (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1969), pp. 120-21, 126-27; Stevenson, pp. 31-32; Cutts, The Shattered Glass, p. 105; Traversi, An Approach to Shakespeare, I, 130.

swift-paced staging and language, and the tone produced by all of these and by the imagery conspire to give a sense of inevitability to the action that is emotionally and dramatically absolute. Only intellectually, and then only when one deliberately moves outside the spell of the play, can one begin to analyze the action in cause-effect terms. Surely such casting off of the total effect of the play is a kind of perversity. The young lovers' futile attempt to thwart fate casts such a feverish glow over everything else, including the Friar, the warring families, and the reader's intellect as opposed to emotion, that only after the lovers are dead can any appraisal of the meaning of the action be made. Even then the meaning is of two kinds. One of them is still the grandeur of young love which transcends death; and taken all in all, this is the chief meaning of the play. The other is the meaning to those left behind. That meaning assumes its proper importance at the end of the play, with the Capulets and Montagues assembled before Prince Escalus at the tomb. To the families and to Escalus the poisoned youth and still bleeding Juliet are mysteries that cry out for explanation. Friar Laurence, as the only person in the play knowing the whole tragic series of events, gives them a recapitulation which resolves the mystery and points its meaning to the survivors.

Friar Laurence in his recapitulation serves as a chorus, reducing the swift pace of previous events to a brief and bare narrative that in its starkness contrasts with

the rich poetry of the lovers' ecstasy in the brief moments of the play when they are together. It further points up in its simplicity what had been obvious to the audience all along: the tragic results of the hatred of the families for each other. To the survivors the meaning is clear: love must replace hatred.²² Prince Escalus, indeed, roots the tragedy in the displeasure of Heaven at the hatred of the two houses:

Where be these enemies? Capulet! Montague!
See what a scourge is laid upon your hate.
That Heaven finds means to kill your joys with love!
And I, for winking at your discords too,
Have lost a brace of kinsmen. All are punished.
(V.iii.291-95)

It seems significant, however, and an indication of the kind of tragedy Shakespeare intended this play to be, that this sentiment is put in the mouth of the Prince rather than the cleric. True, Friar Laurence had seemed earlier to recognize the inevitability of the tragedy in his "A greater power than we can contradict/ Hath thwarted our intents" (V.iii.153-54). But after his recapitulation of the mischances he says no more, and the explanation itself is a bare recital of action with no attribution of them to Providence. Laurence, of all those present, might be expected to fall back upon the terrible, yet paradoxically comforting, interpretation of the tragedy broached by Escalus. That he does not lends credence to the interpre-

²²Stauffer, p. 55, believes that this moral lesson becomes the main theme of the drama: "In no other play does Shakespeare envisage a general moral order operating with such inhuman, mechanical severity."

tation of the action as a mystery explainable in its entirety neither by "the stars" nor by mistaken human action. Shakespeare in this early tragedy already sees the mystery of life, its tragic potential, and refuses to attribute its turns either to deterministic or to entirely rational causes. Friar Laurence, in his uncertainty over his own role in the tragedy, an uncertainty in hindsight since he always meant well, is thus at the end of the play a silent exemplar of Shakespeare's own refusal to fall back upon comfortable explanations. That Escalus can do so is a function of his office; he must establish civil concord. Friar Laurence, trembling and shaken, is not so certain of the meaning of the action in which he has played such a key role:

. . . here I stand, both to impeach and purge
Myself condemned and myself excused.
(V.iii.226-27)

He has recognized all along the value of love. Now that the Capulets and Montagues are learning its value at such a great cost, Friar Laurence is not one to say that Providence guided his and the young lovers' steps toward that end alone. Nor is Shakespeare.

Much Ado about Nothing

Except for the clerics of the later English history plays, Shakespeare's next treatment of a cleric after Friar Laurence of Romeo and Juliet was probably Friar Francis of Much Ado about Nothing. Although he does not figure as much or as often in the action of Much Ado as does Friar Laurence in Romeo and Juliet, Friar Francis performs an

even more vital plot function, since he is successful in his stratagem whereas in the tragedy Friar Laurence fails. The two clerics are very similar in motive and intention. No more wise than Friar Laurence, no more high-minded and well-meaning, Friar Francis yet has one advantage over the would-be healer of discord in the tragedy--he does not have to work virtually alone. Through his plan, with the co-operation of the lady and her powerful supporters, discord is healed and love ends in happiness and joyous life rather than in death.

Friar Francis first appears late in the play, where Claudio, falsely convinced of Hero's perfidy, has resolved to expose the girl for a wanton during the wedding ceremony. In a scene painful to both audience and on-lookers he proceeds to do so. The bewildered Hero, dismayed and finally overwhelmed, sinks into a swoon. From that point on Friar Francis is her active champion. His first words to her upon her revival are "Have comfort, lady" (IV.i. 119), and when her father, convinced by the story told by Claudio and his manipulators, implies that shame should keep her from looking up, Francis sharply asks, "Yea, wherefore should she not?" (IV.i.212). Shortly after, he explains himself:

Hear me a little,
 For I have only been silent so long
 And given way unto this course of fortune
 By noting of the lady. I have marked
 A thousand blushing apparitions
 To start unto her face, a thousand innocent shames
 In angel whiteness beat away those blushes.
 And in her eyes there hath appeared a fire
 To burn the errors that these Princes hold

Against her maiden truth. Call me a fool,
 Trust not my reading nor my observations,
 Which with experimental seal doth warrant
 The tenor of my book--trust not my age,
 My reverence, calling, nor dignity--
 If my sweet lady lie not guiltless here
 Under some biting error.

(IV.i.157-72)

Francis is not content to do his official duty only. That duty he takes care of in the consolation of the lady, but he goes on from that into a personal capacity, to right the wrong his intuition and experience tell him has been committed.²³ He stresses both in his argument. As for intuition, the "thousand blushing apparitions" beaten away by "a thousand innocent shames/ In angel whiteness," as well as the "fire/ To burn the errors . . ." which the Friar has noted in Hero's eyes attest to her innocence. Even if one did not already know the truth of the Friar's surmise, the imagery alone would have much force. Besides, Friar Francis continues, his experience, his age, and his divinity tell him that Hero is being wronged. In face of the contradictory evidence he concludes, "There is some strange misprision in the Princes" (IV.i.187).

To gain time to fathom the mystery, Friar Francis advances a plan much like that of Paulina with Hermione later and that of Friar Laurence with Juliet earlier. It will be given out that Hero is dead; Claudio, hearing that she has died as a result of his public humiliation of her, may love

²³Colby, p. 131. However, Francis' seriousness of purpose does not keep him from punning. His "noting of the lady" is one of numerous puns in the play on the key word of the title.

her again. Whatever happens, such a stratagem seems the best course. By this plan Friar Francis, like Friar Laurence, initiates a turn in the plot that determines the course of future action. In his intuition of the truth concerning Hero and his plan to redeem her if possible, he likewise becomes a point of reference by which the actions of the other characters must be judged, a sort of moral yardstick.²⁴ Only Beatrice is fully in agreement with him about Hero,²⁵ and she is wrong about Claudio, so wrong that she would use the newly-revealed love of Benedick for her to cause him to take Claudio's life in revenge. Moreover, Friar Francis's role here is in accord with what this study sees as Shakespeare's generally respectful treatment of the clergy. Francis goes beyond mere plot function into active dramatic and moral reconciliation, which is the heart of comedy; in this respect he has more success in his purpose than any other of Shakespeare's manipulating friars save perhaps Duke Vincentio. Even though he lacks the depth of characterization of Friar Laurence, his words and actions show him to be a resourceful person and a good cleric.²⁶

²⁴T. W. Craik, "Much Ado About Nothing," Scrutiny, 19 (Oct. 1953), 314.

²⁵Leonato wavers. He and Antonio later defend her reputation in their challenge of Claudio (V.i). J. C. Maxwell, "The Church Scene in Much Ado: The Absence of Antonio," Notes and Queries, n.s. 14 (April 1967), 135, argues that the opening dialogue between Antonio and Leonato in V.i. could not plausibly take place if both knew Hero to be alive. Hence he conjectures that Antonio was absent during the church scene and not aware of Friar Francis's plot.

²⁶Not all critics are willing to grant the wisdom and

In this connection Friar Francis's plan is merciful not only to Hero but to the deceived Claudio as well. Instead of repudiating or disproving Claudio, Friar Francis intends to educate him; counter-deception is thus a proper and fitting tool to heal a love affair broken by deception in the first place.²⁷ In the church scene, then, Friar Francis is the center of both plot and dramatic interest.²⁸

propriety of the Friar's plan. Huhner, pp. 168-69, for example, objects strongly: "Had it [the plan] been devised by a friend of the heroine, there would have been nothing incongruous about it. . . .

. . . however, in view of the high standard of the Church, is it right or even natural that a priest should devise a lying scheme which has for its object not only the deception of the parties most interested, but which at the same time makes a mockery of the Church's most sacred functions and celebrates funeral rites in all solemnity in connection with a person who is not dead, and does this with all the ostentation which only the rich and the influential can compass?" Huhner's last cavil comes from the Friar's suggestion: "Maintain a mourning ostentation,/ And on your family's old monument/ Hang mournful epitaphs, and do all rites/ That appertain unto a burial" (IV.i.207-10). Apparently Huhner would have preferred somebody like the priest in Hamlet, who allowed no nonsense in his funerals.

²⁷Walter R. Davis, "Introduction," Twentieth Century Interpretations of "Much Ado about Nothing", ed. Walter R. Davis (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 9.

²⁸The scene is generally but not universally admired. Parrott, p. 157, calls it "the most effective dramatic scene in the play." [George] Bernard Shaw, Shaw on Shakespeare, ed. Edwin Wilson (New York: Dutton, 1961), p. 156, says of an Ellen Terry production of 1903: "I have never seen the church scene go before--didn't think it could go, in fact." Stevenson does not comment directly on the dramatic force of the scene but doubts that it was supposed to be set in a church, suggesting instead a private home (p. 42), averring that "Friar Francis's form is as stripped of religious meaning as a Justice's of the Peace" (p. 42) and that the scene has an "essentially secular character" (p. 44). The latter two points are true only to the extent that Claudio does not give the Friar free rein. Stauffer, p. 70, strikes a frequently-heard note in

If Friar Francis enjoys a central role in the church scene, the same cannot be said of the concluding scene of the play (V.iv), where he makes his next appearance. The opening line of the scene is his, and it is a most satisfying line for Friar, characters, and audience: "Did I not tell you she was innocent?" After that, however, he properly takes second place to the two sets of lovers, Claudio still unaware that he is to get his Hero and Benedick still not having asked Beatrice's hand. As is true of the play as a whole, Benedick and Beatrice threaten to dominate even this scene, but the glorious surprise of Hero's being alive cannot be topped by even that sparkling pair. After Hero is unmasked Friar Francis, like Laurence at the close of Romeo and Juliet, tells the assembled characters that he can explain the mystery:

All this amazement can I qualify.
 When after that the holy rites are ended,
 I'll tell you largely of fair Hero's death.
 Meantime let wonder seem familiar,
 And to the chapel let us presently.
 (V.iv.67-71)

He will have a happier tale to tell than did the trembling friar of the tragedy. No less eager than Laurence to reconcile strife and aid young love, Friar Francis finds himself in the fortunate position of having successfully done so. As a manipulator of people and events in the interests of justice he is not far behind the Duke who assumes the robes and office of a friar to accomplish his just and

declaring that both denunciation scene and reconciliation scene are "melodramatic."

merciful ends, Vincentio of Measure for Measure. His motives are as high. His role and dramatic function, however, are much simpler and more natural than those of the Friar-Duke in the "problem comedy."

Measure for Measure

As is usual in Shakespeare's plays, the unstable situation out of which conflict will develop is introduced early in Measure for Measure. Duke Vincentio in the first scene announces that he intends to absent himself from Vienna for a while, meanwhile entrusting the government to Lord Angelo, his Deputy. The Duke's question of Escalus concerning Angelo's fitness for rule would not escape an alert audience, nor would the tone of the jesting of Lucio and the other bawds of Scene ii. The moral climate of Vienna leaves something to be desired. This impression is reinforced by the complaints of Mistress Overdone at the new proclamations against "houses." Angelo obviously intends severity. This intention is further illustrated by Claudio's being seen on his way to prison, condemned to death for fornication. Claudio's plan to have his sister Isabella plead for his life before Angelo promises further complication, and the Duke's interview with Friar Thomas of I.iii, during which he reveals his plan to pose as a friar in order to observe developments firsthand, throws light on his future role. Momentous action in Vienna involving a disguised Duke, a severe if morally untested

Deputy, and a convicted fornicator and his sister, a fair young lady on the eve of taking holy vows, are shortly to develop. The most interesting thing about all this is the ambiguity surrounding the principals. Angelo seems to be a proper, severe man, yet the Duke announces that part of the reason for placing him in authority is to test whether appearance be reality. The Duke himself seems to have been a good prince, beloved of his people, yet he himself admits to having been too lax a ruler for the public good. As Friar Thomas in his simple view of responsibility observes, "It rested in your Grace/ To unloose this tied-up justice when you pleased" (I.iii.31-32). And Claudio, who is condemned to die, explains that his crime is really no crime at all, that he and Juliet stand "upon a true contract" (I.ii.149). Thus a mixed tone is set which cries out for development. Shakespeare knew how to create interest from the first. Only Isabella of those who give early promise of being principals in the action has not appeared on stage by the first three scenes, and only she has yet escaped the cloud of ambiguity of character and intent already cast on the others.

Her opening line, significantly enough, is misunderstood by the nun Francisca, who has apparently been showing her around the nunnery. To Isabella's "And have you nuns no farther privileges?" Francisca rejoins, "Are not these large enough?" (I.iv.1-2). Isabella has to explain that she desires not more, but fewer. Apparently she in-

tends to be a serious novice of an order noted for its severity of rule.²⁹ As Lucio calls for admittance, Francisca asks Isabella to answer him, explaining that votarists of Saint Clare may not speak with men except in the presence of the prioress, and may show their faces only when they remain silent. Isabella, being yet unsworn, may properly answer the call.³⁰ Lucio unfolds Claudio's plan, Isabella agrees to do what she can, and an important part of the complication is in motion as Act I closes. The two principals of this play who are clerical characters, the Duke and Isabella, have not yet become very deeply involved.³¹ They will be, however, very shortly.

²⁹G. K. Hunter, "Six Notes on Measure for Measure," Shakespeare Quarterly, 15 (Summer 1964), 167-69, discusses Shakespeare's apparently detailed acquaintance with the practice of the order. Roy W. Battenhouse, "Measure for Measure and Christian Doctrine of the Atonement," PMLA, 61 (1946), 1035, points out that Isabella's name means "devoted to God."

³⁰Eileen Mackay, "Measure for Measure," Shakespeare Quarterly, 14 (1936), 111-13, argues that Isabella is intended to shine out against a background of ecclesiastical corruption. In this scene, Mrs. Mackay suggests, Francisca plays a comic role, and the set should properly be filled with giggling nuns entertaining themselves frivolously. The text hardly supports such a conjecture here, nor does the play. The argument is provocative, however, particularly in explaining Lucio's behavior with the disguised Duke.

³¹On purely technical grounds, perhaps neither Isabella nor Duke Vincentio is a clerical character. Isabella obviously has not taken final vows when her intention to enter the nunnery is interrupted. Just as obviously, however, Shakespeare intended that she be considered a religious figure and used that condition as an important part of her characterization. Critics treat her as a clerical figure as a matter of course. See, for example, Mona Patrocínio Highley, "Shakespeare's Poetic and Drama-

Isabella is introduced to Angelo, who had not known Claudio had a sister, as ". . . a very virtuous maid/ And to be shortly of a sisterhood,/ If not already" (II.ii.19-21). Her plea for Claudio's life, although she is "too cold" at first, as Lucio has to keep pointing out, soon warms up to such a point that Angelo begins to waver: "She speaks, and 'tis/ Such sense that my sense breeds with it" (II.ii.141-42). His wavering, however, is caused by his physical sense rather than Isabella's argument, as he soon makes clear in soliloquy. Isabella's plea, in accord with her intended vocation and with the theme of the play, leans heavily on Christian mercy. She uses the word

tic Treatment of Six Religious Characters," Diss., Univ. Texas, 1965. The Duke is another matter. No cleric at all, he yet disguises himself as a friar and, more significantly, performs priestly functions, including hearing confession. This has given readers pause. G. B. Harrison, "Shakespeare's Religion," Commonweal 48 (2 July 1948), 283, remarking on the generally sympathetic presentation of Friar Laurence, Friar Francis, and the Priest of Twelfth Night, says, "I am less happy about Friar Thomas and the Duke in 'Measure for Measure.'" The Duke disguises himself as a friar for the most worthy motives, though the deception is questionable; but with some coaching from Friar Thomas he even hears the confessions of the prisoners--on which matter one would like the opinion of his own confessor." Frye, Shakespeare and Christian Doctrine, pp. 275-293, discusses official censorship some time between 1641 and 1651 of a copy of the Second Folio used as reading matter for studies in the English college at Valladolid, Spain. The censor, William Sankey, S. J., cut passages from a number of plays, but Measure for Measure was excised completely. The chief reason, Frye conjectures, was the Duke's impersonation of a friar. He goes on to point out that Luther, Calvin, and Reformation teaching in general held that confession could be made to suitable laymen (p. 291 n.). In my study the theological propriety or impropriety will be ignored; the Duke will simply be examined, along with Isabella, as a clerical character performing certain functions in the drama.

"Heaven" no fewer than ten times and in a particularly appropriate passage refers to Christ's atonement for man's sin:

Why, all the souls that were were forfeit once,
And He that might the vantage best have took
Found out the remedy. How would you be
If He, which is the top of judgement, should
But judge you as you are? Oh, think on that,
And mercy then will breathe within your lips,
Like man new-made.

(II.ii.73-79)

Not understanding Angelo's true nature, she promises to bribe him with prayers from her sisters of the convent. Isabella in this scene is a virtual saint, as Angelo himself recognizes. He is not quite so perceptive in thinking himself one; and in II.iv, his second interview with Isabella, in which he proposes his bargain, he abandons himself to monstrosity. If Isabella will not give herself to him, not only will Claudio die, but he will die slowly under torture. It is hard to see Angelo as anything but despicable--and, because of his hypocritical pretensions, a figure of satiric fun.³²

Interrupting the two scenes of Angelo and Isabella is

³² Leo Kirschbaum, Character and Characterization in Shakespeare (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1962), pp. 119-126, argues that up to the end of II.iv Angelo is not despicable, but becomes that afterwards. He notes that the play likewise changes at about that point into "theatrical trickery." One might observe that if Shakespeare intended a play other than tragedy, this point is about where a change of some kind must begin. R. Balfour Daniels, "Shakespeare and the Puritans," Shakespeare Association Bulletin, 13 (Jan. 1938), 40-53, argues that both Angelo and Malvolio are intended as portraits of puritans and that Shakespeare disliked the pair intensely. The former point cannot be proved, but the latter seems self-evident.

a brief but significant appearance of the disguised Duke interviewing Juliet in prison (II.iii). The audience might expect the Duke, as manipulator of the action of the play, to check out the circumstances of Angelo's first official act of dramatic moment. Angelo's hypocrisy and duplicity, already seen, although not in their entirety, and the sympathy for Claudio openly expressed by Escalus and the Provost would seem to call for some kind of action by the Duke. The expected role is not played in this scene, however; instead, the Duke hides his long-range plot purpose from even the audience. His only comfort for Juliet is spiritual; his sole concern seems to be whether she truly repents her sin. Her statement that she repents not from fear of punishment but from loathing of the sin itself satisfies the Duke in his role of Friar Lodowick.³³ The emphasis thus is not on Vincentio as Duke righting affairs of state but on the Duke as spiritual healer, a role he plays throughout the play as a part of his general plan, but which is here isolated into a spiritual function alone with no touches of the secular concern the Duke has in the play as a whole.³⁴ This thematic function is re-

³³ Douglas L. Peterson, "Measure for Measure and the Anglican Doctrine of Contrition," Notes and Queries, n.s. 11 (April 1964), 135-37, using a passage from John Donne for support, argues that Juliet exhibits "perfect contrition" in the Anglican understanding of it but that Claudio does not until shamed into it.

³⁴ John P. Cutts, "Perfect Contrition: A Note on Measure for Measure," Notes and Queries, n.s. 7 (Nov. 1960), 417.

peated in III.i.5-41, in the Duke's interview with Claudio and his "be absolute for death" speech--but with a subtle difference. The emphasis on the vanity of human existence in the Duke's long discourse to Claudio has none of the insistence on true penitence of the interview with Juliet nor nothing of the hope that comes from such penitence.³⁵ Its stoic comfort Claudio pretends to find convincing, but there is a perfunctory note in his reaction at the conclusion: "I humbly thank you./ To sue to live, I find I seek to die,/ And, seeking death, find life. Let it come on" (III.i.41-43). That his acceptance of the Duke's argument is more polite than deeply felt is shown in his plea for life to Isabella later in the same scene. Thus far, the Duke has obviously failed with Claudio; further manipulation will be necessary.

The conversation between Claudio and Isabella is the final appearance of the latter before she becomes a part of the Duke's over-all plan; the exchange thus enjoys a special significance in assessment of Isabella's character. At this point there appears no hope for Claudio, for whom the play has developed considerable sympathy, save in Isa-

³⁵ Brandes reads the speech as like Hamlet's "blackness" but going even further (p. 407): "Here for the first time Shakespeare anticipates Schopenhauer" (p. 408). Rossiter, p. 122, notes its "skeptical deflations of human pride and self-importance, doubts of human validity, . . . most un-Friarlike lacking in the faintest whisper of a Christian hope. . . ." He continues: "Those who want a 'pessimist' Shakespeare will make the most of this speech; and those who want to softpedal or mute the disturbing note will do the opposite."

Isabella's submission to Angelo. Isabella likewise has been presented sympathetically. The apparently insoluble situation on the surface has all the ingredients of a tragic dilemma. The audience, however, knows the identity of the mysterious friar, knows that he is listening to the exchange, and knows that the play is to be a comedy. With these points kept in mind, the apparently insoluble situation becomes much less than that, and the blame that has been heaped on Claudio or Isabella, according to the reader's predilection, seems in many cases to be greater than the situation calls for. Both behave in an entirely predictable and natural manner under the circumstances.

Claudio, wishing to live and faced with sudden knowledge of an opportunity to do so, even though at the expense of his sister's virtue, begs her compliance. She, in turn, finds the price too high and vigorously rounds upon her brother for asking it. Both are acting impulsively and from instinct, not reason. They do not change their attitudes until the Friar-Duke aids them, in the one case by a comforting lie and in the other by a stratagem which promises justice. Readers--and the play--need the Duke as badly as do Claudio and Isabella when he interrupts their painful interview.³⁶

³⁶Most views of Isabella and Claudio's dilemma range somewhere between the two vigorously phrased examples that follow. Arthur Quiller-Couch, "Introduction," Measure for Measure, ed. Arthur Quiller-Couch and J. Dover Wilson (Cambridge, Eng.: Univ. of Cambridge Press, 1922), p. xxx, while admitting that Isabella made the "righteous choice," goes on to say: "Still, it has to be admitted that she is

At this point the Duke in his disguise takes on more than the consolatory role he has played with Juliet and Claudio. Although his purpose still involves consolation, he moves firmly into his more complicated role as manipulator of the action in unfolding the bed-trick scheme to Isabella. Before he does so, however, he makes a temporary disposal of Claudio, whose last word had been an appeal to Isabella to hear him. She had stopped her ears and had indeed proceeded further in denunciation of him than her more settled concept of Christian charity might justify, despite the impossibility of his request. The Duke, interrupting, sends Isabella apart and brings Claudio to his senses by means of the falsehood--to Claudio a comforting one--that Angelo had merely been testing Isabella. Returning to his "be absolute for death" theme, the Duke assures Claudio that there is no hope for reprieve. The overwrought young man, moments before so loath to die, is apparently reconciled: "Let me ask my sister pardon. I am so out of love with life that I will sue to be rid of it" (III.i.73-74). The perfunctory note

something rancid in her chastity; and on top of this, not by any means such a saint as she looks. To put it nakedly, she is all for saving her own soul, and she saves it by turning, of a sudden, into a bare procuress." R. W. Chambers, Man's Unconquerable Mind (London: Jonathan Cape, 1939; rpt. 1964), p. 290, says: "Isabel then, as Shakespeare sees her and asks us to see her, would frankly, joyously give her life to save Claudio: and 'greater love hath no man than this.' And now Claudio is asking for what she cannot give, and she bursts out in agony."

that had colored Claudio's response to the Duke's counsel earlier, a note which his request of Isabella supports, may be here, but his desire to ask Isabella's pardon is new. He is not thinking entirely of himself. The Duke, in a plan which will very shortly go far beyond mere observation and occasional consolation, is here performing an action thoroughly in accord with his role as friar, even though he has to do a certain amount of dissembling --as had Friar Laurence and Friar Francis. The white lie to Claudio apparently has no evil effect in the play.³⁷

The argument that the Duke's machinations have no evil effect in the play--quite the reverse, that they produce positive good--has not stilled the controversy and scruples among critics arising from the bed-trick scheme which the Duke now proposes to Isabella. After a lengthy prose explanation the Duke summarizes its aims: "And here, by this, is your brother saved, your honor untainted, the poor Mariana advantaged, and the corrupt Deputy scaled" (III.ii.262-66).³⁸ By the end of the play all these objectives and many more as worthwhile and as comic in the broad meaning of that term have been accomplished. The

³⁷ A point noted in Nevill Coghill, "Comic Form in Measure for Measure," Shakespeare Survey, 8 (1955), 19. Quiller-Couch, p. xxxiv, regards the lie as unworthy of a Duke and severely criticizes the Duke in the exchange with Claudio.

³⁸ Evans, p. 138, points to Measure for Measure, its "argument, analysis, compression, a curious, or as Horatio might indicate, an over-curious searching," as marking a "profound stage in the development of Shakespeare's language."

chief objection to the Duke's machinations seems to lie not in the end toward which he works, but in the means he employs. What in, say, Rosalind of As You Like It is universally considered comic resourcefulness in her straightening out the tangled situation of that play is in the Duke sometimes considered unpleasant manipulation and scheming. For example, Larry S. Champion feels that the spectator's confidence in the Duke is undermined from the first by his failure to justify morally his temporary abdication of authority, his "moral cowardice" in turning over to Angelo the bringing about of admittedly desirable reforms, his assuming his deus ex machina function too late for any comic blocking at Claudio's predicament, and what Champion feels is the Duke's failure in general to provide clear comic perspective because of his "enigmatic" character.³⁹ A noted authority on the "problem comedies," William W. Lawrence, admits the contradictions between the bed-trick stratagem and the Duke's reproof of Juliet, his own disguise, and the teaching of the Church. He insists, however, that these contradictions would not have disturbed Shakespeare's audience: "When the Duke says that an action is most upright, it is certainly just that, as far as the play is concerned."⁴⁰ When it is considered that part

³⁹Larry S. Champion, Evolution of Shakespeare's Comedy: A Study in Dramatic Perspective (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 146-52.

⁴⁰William W. Lawrence, "Measure for Measure and Lucio," Shakespeare Quarterly, 9 (1958), 450.

of the purpose of the substitution of Mariana for Isabella in Angelo's garden is the moral education of Angelo, the scheme seems ethically as well as dramatically justified.⁴¹ By it Angelo is placed in exactly the same situation as Claudio, whom the Deputy has condemned to death. The Duke will thus achieve one of the aims he stated at the beginning: "Hence shall we see,/ If power change purpose, what our seemers be" (I.iii.53-54). The Duke's actions as manipulator are all on the side of justice and mercy, and to argue that his methods are suspect seems to be a perversion of the intent of the play. This study reads the Duke as a "manipulating friar" in the tradition of Friar Laurence and Friar Francis. Like the latter, the Duke's role is comic; like both, his intentions are good. We will enjoy more success in educating his subjects in ethics, even Christian charity, than did the unqualifiedly successful Friar Francis and the only qualifiedly successful Friar Laurence.

In order to allow the Duke to achieve his ends and thus to achieve his own, Shakespeare alters the character and function of both the Duke and Isabella somewhat at the

⁴¹For discussion of the marriage contracts between Angelo-Mariana and Claudio-Juliet, accepted as binding and valid in the play, see Davis P. Harding, "Elizabethan Betrothals and Measure for Measure," The Journal of English and Germanic Philology, 49 (April 1950), 139-58; S. Nagarajan, "Measure for Measure and Elizabethan Betrothals," Shakespeare Quarterly, 14 (Spring 1963), 115-19; Ernest Schanzer, The Problem Plays of Shakespeare (New York: Schocken Books, 1963), pp. 75-78, 109-112; Ernest Schanzer, "The Marriage Contracts in Measure for Measure," Shakespeare Survey, 13 (1960), 81-89.

Duke's broaching his plan to Isabella. Previously the Duke had been more of an observer than a manipulator, more of a consoling Friar than a Duke who, though still in disguise and playing his Friar's part, must step in and order a complicated sequence of events for the half of the play remaining. Most critics have noticed the change in both the Duke and Isabella at this point, and some have lamented it. For example, E. M. W. Tillyard states that the "true" Isabella is the one who lashes out at Claudio for his suggestion that she accede to Angelo's demands:

That is the true Isabella, and whether or not we like that kind of woman is beside the point. But immediately after her speech, at line 152, the Duke takes charge and she proceeds to exchange her native ferocity for the hushed and submissive tones of a well-trained confidential secretary.⁴²

Agnes Mure Mackenzie feels that Shakespeare grew tired of Isabella and gave up attempting to make her a real personage at this point, and further, that the play itself becomes "cold machinery."⁴³ That the Duke's role as manipulator of both characters and action begins to dominate the plot and make the Duke a somewhat dehumanized force at

⁴²E. M. W. Tillyard, Shakespeare's Problem Plays (London: Chatto and Windus, 1950), p. 128.

⁴³Agnes Mure Mackenzie, The Women in Shakespeare's Plays (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1924), p. 242. Anna B. Jameson, Shakespeare's Heroines: Characteristics of Women Moral, Poetical, and Historical (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1911), pp. 96-97, argues for Isabella's disapprobation of the scheme and complains of the Duke's predilection for plots. Isabella complies because ". . . her situation as a religious novice, and his [the Duke's] station, habit, and authority, as her spiritual director, demand this sacrifice" (p. 97).

this point cannot be denied. In the half of a play yet remaining sensational plot turns will characterize the action even more than in the first half, and the characters will begin to assume allegorical lines not previously made clear. Paradoxically, however, the end result of the play will be to humanize characters who need it, chiefly Isabella and Angelo. Both have been seen in certain aspects of their character, but both are due for profound changes before the action ends. That these changes will occur at the expense of the Duke in his tending to become a force rather than a person merely enhances his intentions in adopting the role he does. Angelo, and, one feels, Isabella also, must undergo some change. It will come about in both instances at the Duke's direction.⁴⁴

After the Duke broaches his plan to Isabella but before he brings her and Mariana together and then gets involved in the head substitution and other complications, there is a long comic scene (III.ii) centering around the Duke and Lucio. Besides furthering the comic tone in a play that at times threatens to get too involved and serious, the scene ennobles the Duke and thus disabuses viewers and readers of the faintest suspicion, should they be inclined to think it, that the Duke in any way deserves Lucio's later characterization of him as "the old fantas-

⁴⁴Rossiter, pp. 160-62, notes that in the interview with Claudio Isabella is frightened and small-souled. She does not end small-souled, he says, but Shakespeare gives her no transitions.

tical Duke of dark corners" (IV.iii.163).⁴⁵ The scene has three episodes, the first showing Elbow with the arrested Pompey, the second involving Lucio with first Pompey and then the Duke, the third bringing on Escalus, who remains throughout the play an example of conscientious, thoughtful authority, to engage in a conversation with the disguised Duke about Escalus's absent superior, Duke Vincentio himself. Each episode has a function in the theme and meaning of the play and in establishing the real nature of the Duke. The first, a comic episode in which the unrepentant Pompey is being carried to jail by the inimitable Elbow, shows the seriousness of the Duke when faced with moral ignorance and audacity of Pompey's type: "Take him to prison, officer./ Correction and instruction must both work/ Ere this rude beast will profit" (III.ii.32-34). The second has Lucio assuring the disguised Duke that the new severity of law in Vienna would in no way have received the approbation of the absent ruler. Prodded by questions, Lucio affirms that he knows the Duke well and that he is quite different from what people think, being but a covert bawd and "A very superficial, ignorant, unweighing fellow" (III.ii.147-48). The dramatic irony of having Lucio slander the Duke to his face (Lucio is the only person punished at the end of the play, and for that very transgression) is

⁴⁵ Stevenson, p. 45, alluding to what he terms "attempts to save the Duke's character," says: "These efforts, if not always successful, at least prove that his character needs vindication; and that his actions are by no means self-justifying."

comic, but an important point is its effect on the Duke, causing him to muse after Lucio exits on how ". . . backwounding calumny/ The whitest virtue strikes" (III.ii.197-89). As though Lucio's false charges had nevertheless disturbed him, the Duke questions Escalus closely in the third episode concerning the old lord's opinion of Duke Vincentio. Escalus's answer is reassuring and emphatic; the Duke has ever been "One that, above all other strifes, contended especially to know himself" (III.ii.245-46); as for his pleasures, he was ". . . a gentleman of all temperance" (III.ii.250). In view of Lucio's later surprise when he pulls off the Duke's hood, and of his slanders here, it seems unlikely that Lucio recognized the Duke in disguise all along, as has been suggested.⁴⁶ Rather, the three episodes in the scene serve to establish the Duke as a moral yardstick, his rectitude unquestioned.⁴⁷ This intention on Shakespeare's part is further shown in the Duke's twenty-two line soliloquy which ends this scene and act (III.ii.275-96), an indictment of Angelo.⁴⁸ The Duke

⁴⁶Coghill, p. 23.

⁴⁷John Vyvyan, The Shakespearean Ethic (London: Chatto and Windus, 1959), p. 92, points to ll. 231-33, "I am a brother/ Of gracious order, late come from the See/ In special business from His Holiness" as indicating a special spiritual function of the Duke: "In the England of Shakespeare's day, such reverence was not shown to Rome; and when Shakespeare writes passages of this kind, they are purposeful. The least we can infer is that the Duke was specially conscious of performing the will of heaven. . . ."

⁴⁸Harrison, ed., The Complete Works, p. 1122 (n.), states that most critics do not believe this passage was written by Shakespeare. Tillyard, Shakespeare's Problem

is now ready to complete the plan shortly before broached to Isabella. In doing so he will change somewhat the kind of play that has been presented up to this point, but, as has already been remarked, will resolve comically a most vexing and complicated set of situations.

In IV.i. the Duke brings Isabella and Mariana together. The text indicates that Mariana has known the disguised Duke for some time, for she says on seeing him approach: "Here comes a man of comfort, whose advice/ Hath often stilled my brawling discontent" (IV.i.8-9). The statement does not preclude the possibility of Vincentio's having done comfort as Duke rather than as Friar. We are surely intended to understand that the Duke has visited her several times as Friar, however: both Mariana's and Isabella's deference show that they regard the Duke's advice as the voice of the Church. She readily agrees to the Duke's plan to substitute her for Isabella in Angelo's garden. The Duke takes pains to assure Mariana of the innocence and legality of the plan, lest the long-neglected girl have later doubts about it:

He [Angelo] is your husband on a precontract.
To bring you thus together, 'tis no sin.
Sith that the justice of your title to him
Doth flourish the deceit. Come, let us go.
(IV.i.72-75)

Plays, pp. 125-26, believes that it was: "Far from being spurious, the Duke's couplets in their antique stiffness and formality agree with the whole trend of the play's second half in relaxing the poetical tension and preparing for a more abstract form of drama."

Mariana is satisfied, as is Isabella. Shakespeare obviously intends that the audience be satisfied also; here, as throughout the play, the Duke's wisdom and morality are beyond question.

The next scene is both comic and sensational, in line with the turn in the play upon the Duke's full assumption of his role as manipulator of the action. Its comedy lies in the grim humor of Pompey's having to learn a new trade, assistant to Abhorson the executioner, and the low comedy exchange between them; its sensationalism lies in further stratagems on the Duke's part to save Claudio from the double-dealing Angelo. Contrary to what the Duke expects, Angelo sends a note to the prison not for Claudio's reprieve, but for his present execution. Angelo further demands Claudio's head in proof; the Duke is forced to obtain the Provost's permission for a delay. He does so by revealing a letter with the hand and seal of the Duke, who, he assures the Provost, will return to Vienna within two days. By questioning the Provost, the Duke determines that one Bernardine has also been condemned to death, so that Bernardine's head can be substituted for that of Claudio. In the succeeding scene, however, Bernardine outrageously--and comically--refuses to be executed. Fortunately, Ragozine, a pirate, has meantime died a natural death; his head will serve. The play has turned into something of a "thriller."

Despite the sensational aspects of the action in these

episodes, Shakespeare continues to protect the Duke by giving him actions and sentiments that clearly exonerate him from any charge of conduct unbefitting his office as either Duke or Friar. The Duke is all justice and mercy at all times. For example, he comments on what the Provost's action and conversation had made plain: "This is a gentle Provost. Seldom when/ The steeled jailer is the friend of men" (IV.ii.89-90). The Duke questions the Provost closely regarding Bernardine's guilt and spiritual state when he is considering substituting Bernardine's head for Claudio's and is disturbed that Bernardine is unrepentant. As Friar he sees that Bernardine "wants advice" (IV.ii.153) and promises, "I will give him a present shrift and advise him for a better place (IV.ii.223-24). When Bernardine obstinately refuses to prepare himself spiritually for death the Duke laments that ". . . to transport him in the mind he is/ Were damnable" (IV.iii.72-73); he eagerly grasps at the Provost's suggestion that Ragozine's head be substituted, attributing the lucky accident to Heaven. Thus, although the Duke is in full swing as manipulating friar, he is fully in the character of what a friar--and a Duke--should ideally be. His final disposition of Bernardine is in accord with his concern here. Nor is this carefully-wrought image damaged by his conduct with Isabella, who enters shortly after the Ragozine business is settled. True, his intrigue goes on--he deceives Isabella concerning Claudio, telling her that

the newly-ransomed brother is already dead (which, save for the Duke's efforts, he would be), and he sends letters to his confederate Friar Peter by Isabella which, it develops later, will temporarily discomfort her. All of this has its purpose, however; the Duke is looking ahead to the denouement of his long-range intentions. Even his final disposition of Lucio is foreshadowed in the brief episode at the end of the scene where Lucio, up to his old trick of slandering the absent Duke, reveals that he once lied before the Duke about getting a woman with child lest he be forced to marry her. Vincentio will remember the admission when he makes his final judgments. All of these actions are thus in accord with the Duke's stated and implied good intentions throughout.

The Duke's deception of Isabella about Claudio deserves a closer look because of its importance in the later development of Isabella's character. Whether the idea suddenly occurred to the Duke when he heard Isabella's voice outside the prison or whether he had it in mind all along is not clear, but here he first reveals it:

She's come to know
If yet her brother's pardon be come hither.
But I will keep her ignorant of her good,
To make her heavenly comforts of despair
When it is least expected.

(IV.iii.111-15)

On the surface the intention sounds cruel and unnecessary, and it has been so regarded. Georg Brandes, for example, feels that the story is an "entirely unjustified experiment" and was introduced "solely for the sake of an effect

at the end" (p. 407). The "effect at the end" is precisely the reason the Duke keeps Claudio's escape from Angelo a secret. Isabella has not yet been brought to the point where she no longer insists on measure for measure; the Duke's intention is that she reach a higher moral level. Hence the deception. In a play in which forgiveness is a major theme, Isabella, sorely tried, has proceeded no further than human charity, if that far. She must show more than that for Angelo, and the Duke's deception about Claudio gives her a chance to do so, as he foresees.⁴⁹

Friar Peter has been made privy to the Duke's plans; he, like Friar Thomas, is one of the few characters in the play who know the Duke's identity. Giving Friar Peter letters which are to be delivered to some of his lords, the Duke warns:

The Provost knows our purpose and our plot.
The matter being afoot, keep your instruction,
And hold you ever to our special drift,
Though sometimes you do blench from this to that,
As cause doth minister.

(IV.v.2-6)

The Duke has also warned Isabella to abide by instructions, even if he should appear to be speaking against her; as she reports to Mariana, he has told her, ". . . 'tis a physic/ That's bitter to sweet end" (IV.v.78). At the end of Act IV the ladies and Friar Peter depart for their "stand" and a concluding act that to almost all of the principals will have most surprising, and satisfying,

⁴⁹R. W. Chambers, pp. 300-303.

turns. The Duke is soon to appear and right all wrongs.

He does so in Act V, but only after even more mystification, crossed purposes, discoveries, and abrupt changes than characterized the first four acts. The general aim is comedy, but as a part of it two of the principals, Isabella and Angelo, must undergo further development of character. As the last act opens the latter is still, he supposes, secure in his villainy and place, and the former, having been assured of justice upon the return of the Duke, is to come to care less for that than for mercy. It is well that Isabella has been warned to stand fast, however, for in her interview with the Duke in Act V not even the justice she is so sure of obtaining seems to her to be forthcoming. The Duke pretends not to believe her impeachment of Angelo, and Friar Peter offers no immediate help. Isabella is led off, guarded, at the Duke's command; he has business with Mariana and Angelo that must be taken care of.

Mariana's story appears to be received with no more credence than that of Isabella. The key, of course, is the absent Friar, who is soon sent for, the Duke feigning such impatience at the proceedings that he exits after turning them over to Escalus and Angelo. In no longer than the time it would take in life or on stage to change costume he reappears, along with the Provost and Isabella, as Friar Lodowick. The Duke's pleasure in intrigue, disguises, and deception is most manifest in Act V after he

enters as Friar. He enrages Escalus by appearing to slander the state and baits Lucio into blackguarding the Duke even more viciously than before. As Lucio pulls off the cowl, revealing the Duke to the astounded assembly, the Duke cracks: "Thou art the first knave that e'er madest a Duke" (V.i.361). A little later he says as Bernardine is brought in: "There was a friar told me of this man" (V.i.484). He even tells Angelo, after the latter's reprieve, to love Mariana, for he has confessed her and knows her virtue. The Duke obviously has enjoyed his masquerade as Friar. His enjoyment of the deception and its revelation does not hinder his plan as Duke to right the wrongs of Vienna, however; the comedy is to have a moral purpose, as he has promised all along.

The first result is Angelo's admission of guilt and of shame for it. He begs no grace, only immediate sentence and death. Angelo thus learns the Biblical maxim that one's sins will find him out, something he had previously not believed. Angelo's mask has been ripped from his face even more violently than the Friar's was ripped from his by Lucio. The unmasked Friar is not yet finished with Angelo as he sends him and Mariana off with Friar Peter for the latter to perform justice in the long-delayed marriage to Mariana.

The second result of the Duke's plan for righting all wrongs is the development of Isabella from a somewhat pharisaical moral outlook to a spirit of mercy and forgive-

ness that can include even Angelo, who Isabella still thinks has had Claudio executed. Going on her knees to the Duke, she pleads for the Deputy's life. Isabella has learned that mercy is more important than justice which holds too strictly to the letter of the law, and that her previous pride in her "virtue" is not so virtuous as human sympathy.⁵⁰

A third and fourth disposition, not of so great moment as those of Angelo and Isabella, but important nevertheless, have yet to be made. They involve Bernardine and Lucio. Bernardine the Duke turns over to Friar Peter for religious instruction, in which Bernardine had previously proved himself seriously wanting. Besides fitting in well with the comic tone of the play, the Duke's action with Bernardine furthers the moral intents of the Duke as shown throughout; legal penalties must not be applied without consideration of their consequences.⁵¹ As for Lucio, his "punishment," like that of the others, must fit the crime. A bawd himself, he must marry the bawd whom he got with child.⁵² His slander of the Duke is forgiven. In his case,

⁵⁰Her spiritual growth is discussed in Stauffer, pp. 153-56. Like Rossiter, p. 162, who feels that Shakespeare gave Isabella no transition, Stauffer believes that Measure for Measure is "less a drama than a moral demonstration." Bryant, p. 99, observes that it is Isabella's prayer for Angelo that makes her worthy to share the dukedom with Vincentio.

⁵¹This point is made in Muriel C. Bradbrook, "Authority, Truth, and Justice in Measure for Measure," Review of English Studies, 17 (Oct. 1941), 388.

⁵²Rossiter, p. 168, feels that the Duke's "lack of

then, justice is mixed with mercy also; Lucio is not really serious in his complaint that his punishment is ". . . pressing to death, whipping, and hanging" (V.i.528-29). The unveiling of Claudio reprieves Angelo, at least, and, one hopes, leads him to reflect that the next step after conviction of wrong is amendment.⁵³ The Duke's justice is likewise mercy with Angelo. Who is to say that the Duke's desires to make all "punishments" fit the crime are not more those of the Friar than of the Duke? Of the manipulating friars of this portion of the study of Shakespeare's clerics, Duke Vincentio's manipulations must be considered the most successful, because they include the Duke himself, not just other characters.

magnanimity" in his treatment of Lucio is a flaw in the Duke's "ideal shadow of the end."

⁵³ Arthur Sewell, Character and Society in Shakespeare (London: Clarendon, 1951), p. 69, sees no penance in Angelo; he is reprieved, not redeemed. Angelo's marriage is salutary, as is Lucio's, he feels.

CHAPTER V

A BAGFUL OF DIVERSE CLERICAL CHARACTERS

The Comedy of Errors

As an adaptation of Plautine comedy, with characteristic balance of characters, observation of the unities, subordination of character to incident, and farcical action and tone, The Comedy of Errors is an experiment in a vein which Shakespeare did not pursue in his later development. Shakespeare was Shakespeare from the beginning, however, and even this early experiment foreshadows plot, character, and thematic devices and motifs which the dramatist was to utilize to good effect in later plays. The proper conjugal relationship, always disturbed when unwarranted jealousy and shrewishness appear, is here examined as part of the comic business, and the restoration of order after it has been temporarily disrupted by plot turns and misapprehension or error by the characters ends the action. Reconciliation of loved ones after long separation, a continuing motif in Shakespearean comedy, is a major comic effect. Shakespeare even employs a clerical character, as in several subsequent comedies, to penetrate the veil of appearance to the reality

beneath and to explicate moral truths and lessons arising from the tangled action. In this case the clerical figure not only points other characters toward truth and reconciliation but also shares in the final reconciliation of discord herself.

Aemilia, the good "abbess" of Ephesus, does not figure directly in the action of The Comedy of Errors until the fifth act, where, as is usual in the comedies, the conflicts are resolved. She functions as a plot device on first appearance, allowing the mistakes not only to continue but to intensify, this in her providing sanctuary to the beleaguered master and servant of Syracuse, who are being pursued by practically all of the cast in the belief that they are the supposedly mad master and servant of Ephesus. When, a little later, the real Antipholus of Ephesus and his servant Dromio appear on the street before the "priory," the Abbess can produce the Syracusan duo from within the sanctuary and the mystery will be solved, if not completely explained. Aemilia's role in her first appearance goes beyond mere plot function, however, into an examination of proper conduct in marriage. Listening to Adriana's complaint of her husband's misbehavior, Aemilia by leading questions causes Adriana to admit that the wife reprehended her husband roughly, publicly, and constantly, so that it is no wonder, as Aemilia sees it, that he went mad:

The venom clamors of a jealous woman
Poisons more deadly than a mad dog's tooth.
It seems his sleeps were hindered by thy railing,
And thereof comes it that his head is light.

(V.i.69-72)

She continues to lecture Adriana on her culpability, so much so that Luciana protests. Adriana, however, realizes that she has betrayed herself and offers no objection. Aemilia is essentially correct, of course; the irony lies in the fact that the pair taking sanctuary with her are those of Syracuse rather than of Ephesus. Unlike Cardinal Bouchier, the Archbishop of Canterbury in Richard III who was persuaded by Buckingham to bring young York out of sanctuary to the court, the Abbess will not be moved by Adriana's pleas that her "husband" be released to her; Aemilia intends to restore him to his wits:

Be patient, for I will not let him stir
Till I have used the approved means I have,
With wholesome syrups, drugs, and holy prayers,
To make of him a formal man again.
It is a branch and parcel of mine oath,
A charitable duty of my order.
Therefore depart, and leave him here with me.
(V.i.102-08)

Aemilia's role in this episode is in accord with that of most of Shakespeare's clerics: they are serious and responsible in assuming and discharging what they see as their duty. A few minutes afterwards, the entire body of principals in the play being still assembled on the street before her house but no more enlightened as to what is happening than they have been, Aemilia comes out with Antipholus of Syracuse and his Dromio to begin the denouement. She has recognized Aegeon but is not yet aware that the Antipholi are her sons. Soon made acquainted with that fact, and the "one day's error" being explained to everyone's satisfaction, she invites them all into the abbey for a feast, herself a

chief figure in the reconciliation and general merriment. A play which began with the doom of death ends not only with reprieve but also with restoration of all that is best or could be hoped for to all principals, not the least of whom is the joyful Abbess. In the Aegeon-Aemilia restoration Shakespeare strikes a note that, like many others in the play, raises its level above mere farce. Clerics are not so sacred in Shakespeare that they cannot serve all kinds of dramatic purposes, including low comedy, but in The Comedy of Errors the Aegeon-Aemilia framework adds an especially dignified--and joyous--note to the comedy.

The Taming of the Shrew

In The Taming of the Shrew, as in The Two Gentlemen of Verona, one cannot strictly speak of clerical characters, for the priests in the former are only mentioned, as are Friar Patrick and Friar Lawrence in the latter; they do not appear in person. Their function is thus relatively unimportant; yet they help form the total pattern of Shakespeare's use of clerics in his plays. The unnamed priest who marries Petruchio and Katharina, presented in Gremio's vivid account of the outlandish proceedings, attempts to perform an ordinary clerical function in Shakespearean comedy, an action treated seriously and respectfully in Romeo and Juliet, Much Ado about Nothing, Twelfth Night, and Measure for Measure. Here, however, burlesque and horse-play prevail. Petruchio is reported as roaring out an oath

in response to the priest's putting the marriage question, knocking the priest down, stamping and swearing "as if the vicar meant to cozen him," calling for wine and throwing the sops in the sexton's face, and kissing Katharina ". . . with such a clamorous smack/ That at the parting all the church did echo" (III.ii.180-81). Gremio feels ashamed. What he and all save Petruchio do not yet know, of course, is that Petruchio has begun the taming of his shrewish wife. One may conjecture that the priest, had he known, would probably have been of Aemilia's mind about cursedness and would have approved. What the episode shows about Shakespeare's handling of clerics is that he stands ready to use them for comic purposes when they can be useful in that capacity. Despite what this study maintains is his generally respectful treatment of clerics, they are not sacrosanct. If Petruchio must begin his campaign as early as possible, let it begin at the beginning, even if that be the service uniting him and his shrew. She will never be a proper wife, ceremony or no ceremony, until she recognizes her husband as husband. The wedding is the beginning.

Like the priest who marries Petruchio and Katharina, the priest who marries Lucentio and Bianca does not appear in person; Biondello reports that the cleric is ready for the marriage of the pair (V.i.1) and, sent home, remarks just before he spies Vincentio that he has ". . . seen them [Lucentio and Bianca] in the church together" (V.i.42). Lucentio will have much explaining to do, but the conven-

tional lovers of the subplot have been married in the conventional way. The second priest, although he has a much less interesting experience than the first, has a more typical function as a cleric in Shakespearean comedy.

Love's Labors Lost

Love's Labors Lost contains a portrayal of a clerical type that was to appear in two other plays, As You Like It and The Merry Wives of Windsor. Sir Nathaniel, like the other two distinctly Protestant clerics, Sir Oliver Martext and Sir Hugh Evans, is a figure of fun; moreover, as is true of Sir Hugh, the fun of Sir Nathaniel is largely verbal in nature. Amidst the feast of languages of Love's Labors Lost he provides a side dish which, if not strictly necessary to the main course, has a piquancy that sets off the rest and adds to the plenty. Along with Holofernes he serves a plot function in one instance, albeit a minor one; and in his role as Alexander in the show of the Nine Worthies he is surely, like Bottom in the "Pyramus and Thisbe" production in A Midsummer Night's Dream, an outstanding part of the ensemble and perhaps even the star, despite his being "a little o'erparted." As purported composer of either "The Owl" or "The Cuckoo" which ends the play, he rises above his own high learning in totally uncharacteristic poetry.

Sir Nathaniel makes his first appearance late in the play (IV.ii), after the gentlemen of Navarre have admitted

their love for the French ladies to themselves but before they have been exposed to each other as traitors to their oaths of studious seclusion. He functions in the scene, along with Holofernes, as a plot device, for pedant and hedge-priest intercept a letter from Berowne to Rosaline which Costard has mistakenly delivered to Jacquenetta. After reading it they send it on to the King. He uses it in the following scene to expose Berowne, who has been having his short-lived fun at the expense of the three other exposed lovers.¹ Apart from this, Sir Nathaniel serves no other vital plot function. Just as Sir Nathaniel's plot function is inseparable from Holofernes, so is his comic function inseparable from that of the pedant whom he so much admires. Sir Nathaniel's admiration of Holofernes is based first of all on what the curate regards as the pedant's command of Latin and of English epithets, an admiration so great that he writes some of the epithets in his notebook. The deference extends beyond matters of language, although based on that, for whereas Dull challenges what he thinks is Holofernes' assertion that the deer just killed was an "awd grey doe,"² stoutly holding out for its being a pricket, Sir Nathaniel, who had started the business by stating that

¹Baldwin, Shakspeare's Five-Act Structure, p. 653, argues that Love's Labor's Lost was rewritten in 1598 with Holofernes' and Sir Nathaniel's parts enlarged and changed from the original, but that the original version, like the finished, employed them as machinery to forward the letter.

²Talbert, Elizabethan Drama, p. 246, suggests that this is what Dull hears in Holofernes' haud credo.

the deer was "a buck of the first head," has no rejoinder to the haud credo of the pedant. Holofernes' superior knowledge extends to all fields. Curate and schoolmaster must take refuge from such ignorance as that of Dull in their superior intellect and learning, as Nathaniel explains in a curious bit of doggerel verse:

And such barren plants are set before us that we
 thankful should be,
 Which we of taste and feeling are, for those parts
 that do fructify in us more than he.
 For as it would ill become me to be vain, indiscreet,
 or a fool,
 So were there a patch set on learning, to see him in
 a school.
 But omne bene, say I, being of an old father's mind,
 Many can brook the weather that love not the wind.
 (V.ii.29-34)

Sir Nathaniel apparently is attempting some sort of verse. His "taste and feeling" are further shown in his applause of Holofernes' "extemporal epitaph on the death of the deer" and in his reception of Berowne's halting hexameters in the intercepted letter: ". . . very learned" (IV.ii.106). He quickly changes his mind a little later upon learning of Holofernes' disapproval of Berowne's efforts; in response to Holofernes' "Did they [the verses] please you, Sir Nathaniel?" he responds, "Marvelous well for the pen" (IV.ii.157-58). Sir Nathaniel will surely agree with Holofernes' every word at dinner that day, where the pedant intends to ". . . prove those verses to be very unlearned, neither savoring of poetry, wit, nor invention" (IV.ii.165-66).

But if Sir Nathaniel's judgment of poetry is none too certain and his deference to the fantastic pedant ludi-

crous, his simple piety is evident and speaks well of his sincerity, at least, in his office of curate. The country pastime of deer-hunting is "Very reverend sport, truly, and done in the testimony of a good conscience" (IV.ii.1-2); Holofernes is free to extemporize at will provided that he "abrogate scurrility" (l. 55); and sending Berowne's letter to the King was done ". . . in the fear of God, very religiously . . ." (ll. 151-52). Sir Nathaniel is most pleased to join Holofernes at dinner, ". . . for society, saith the text, is the happiness of life" (ll. 168-69). Sir Nathaniel praises the Lord for Holofernes, as may his parishioners, for the pedant well tutors their sons and daughters. Jacquenetta's respectful greeting testifies to the esteem in which Sir Nathaniel is held among the more simple members of his flock (l. 84). If Jacquenetta has indeed trod the primrose path with Don Armado, as Costard later maintains, possibly bringing Sir Nathaniel's pastoral effectiveness into question, the braggart, like the other lovers, will do a penance of sorts. His will last longer than that of the gentlemen of Navarre, for he says at the end of the play he has ". . . vowed to Jacquenetta to hold the plow for her sweet love three years" (V.ii.892-93). As is true of the play as a whole, all apparently ends well in Sir Nathaniel's parish and there is no indication of his failure as a curate, despite the ludicrousness of his sycophancy toward Holofernes and the drollery of the show of the Nine Worthies. "But," as Holofernes says, "vir sapit qui pauca loquitur."

All of this is too solemn for the spirit in which Sir Nathaniel is presented. Like every other male character in the play, he is a figure of comedy and occasional satire and must be taken lightly: to defend or attack him as a cleric were to break a butterfly upon a wheel.³

Sir Nathaniel next appears in V.i, after the four lovers of the main plot have dropped their projected regimen of secluded study and decided to lay siege to the ladies. Holofernes and Sir Nathaniel have been at dinner, where, no doubt, the pedant regaled his admiring cohort with most edifying sentiments couched in most impeccable style. As Sir Nathaniel says, for once displaying rhetorical excellence if little discernment:

I praise God for you, sir. Your reasons at dinner have been sharp and sententious, pleasant without scurrility, witty without affection, audacious without pudency, learned without opinion, and strange without heresy.⁴

(V.i.1-6)

³Evans, pp. 3-4, remarks of Berowne's "sonnet" that Sir Nathaniel reads and that of Longaville later: "The rhythm and imagery of the sonneteers dance in and out of the verse as if constantly to remind the audience that the mood of the whole is one of pseudo-seriousness."

⁴One strongly doubts that Holofernes' dinner conversation was all that the dazzled Sir Nathaniel has it. Samuel Johnson, himself a master of good conversation, remarked of this passage: "I know not well what degree of respect Shakespeare intends to obtain for this vicar, but he has here put in his mouth a finished representation of colloquial excellence. It is very difficult to add anything to this character of the schoolmaster's table-talk, and perhaps all the precepts of Castiglione will scarcely be found to comprehend a rule for conversation so justly delineated, so widely dilated, and so nicely limited. . . ." Quoted in W. K. Wimsatt, Jr., ed., Samuel Johnson on Shakespeare (London: McGibbon and Kee, 1960), p. 79.

Holofernes' parade of choice epithets continues; his applying "too peregrinate" to Armado excites such admiration in Sir Nathaniel that he copies it into his notebook! A moment later the curate's enthusiasm again characteristically exceeds his knowledge and discernment when, in response to Holofernes' "anne intelligis, domine?" he falls in with the Latin, "Laus Deo, bene intelligo." Holofernes does not overlook this opportunity to display his pedagogic knowledge and corrective technique in reproving Sir Nathaniel's grammar.⁵

The rest of the scene is given over to a wit combat among Holofernes, Moth, and Costard and to Armado's inviting pedant and curate to stage an entertainment "in the posteriors of this day" for the delectation of the assembled ladies and gentlemen of the main plot. Armado has heard that the pair are ". . . good at such eruptions and sudden breaking-out of mirth . . ." (V.i.120-21). During the planning of the entertainment Sir Nathaniel speaks only

⁵Oscar James Campbell, Shakespeare's Satire (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1943), p. 34, points out that Sir Nathaniel's "Laus Deo, bene intelligo," part of a teacher-student colloquy, like the comedy about the epithets parodies methods of classroom teaching of Latin to which Shakespeare himself was subjected in Stratford. Whitaker, Shakespeare's Use of Learning, p. 85, calls attention to the fact that Shakespeare expected the audience of this play to have had some practice in speaking Latin and points to this incident among others as support. In connection with the appeal to an obviously sophisticated audience of Love's Labors Lost, one might note that Shakespeare employed comedy with a wide range of tone before courtly audiences, as witness The Merry Wives of Windsor, where the cleric, Latin lessons, and the concluding entertainment have close similarity to these elements in Love's Labors Lost.

once, to wonder where men worthy enough to present the Nine Worthies might be found. In such "entertainments" Sir Nathaniel is more modest and retiring than his counterparts Bottom and Sir Hugh Evans, although he is willing to play his part. But Holofernes, like Bottom, has no such modest reservations; he will play three parts himself. Thus, as in A Midsummer Night's Dream, a concluding spectacle to the play is arranged which will add considerably to the comedy.

The King of Navarre is dubious of the entertainment, fearing that the rustics will shame the gentlemen before the ladies; Berowne, however, with his keen perception of irony, feels that a show worse than that of King and company is needed. The Princess likewise insists on the show's going on:

That sport best pleases that doth least know how,
Where zeal strives to content, and the contents
Dies in the zeal of that which it presents.
Their form confounded makes most form in mirth
When great things laboring perish in their birth.
(V.ii.517-21)

The Princess accurately foresees the nature of the presentation.

So does Berowne, and he knows the players well: "The pedant, the braggart, the hedge priest, the fool, and the boy" (V.ii.545-46). Thus are all the male characters of the subplot except Dull struck off in one phrase.⁶ Like the "Pyramus and Thisbe" of A Midsummer Night's Dream, the show

⁶ John Dover Wilson, Shakespeare's Happy Comedies (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), p. 71, notes that the minor characters are drawn as traditional types of the commedia dell' arte.

is entertaining in a different way from the intention. "Pompey the Big" comes on first in the person of Costard,⁷ followed by Sir Nathaniel as "Alisander." The ladies and gentlemen in a jovial mood interrupt so frequently and wittily that poor Sir Nathaniel is dismayed and retires in confusion, amidst jokes by Costard about his painted cloth, Ajax, and the curate's dumbness.⁸ Shakespeare never allows a character to remain simply a caricature, however; there is always some humanizing touch when the picture threatens to get out of balance. Sir Nathaniel has his in the words of Costard after the curate retires in confusion:

There, an't shall please you, a foolish mild man--an honest man, look you, and soon dashed. He is a marvelous good neighbor, faith, and a very good bowler. But for Alisander--alas, you see how 'tis--a little o'erparted.

(V.ii.584-89)

Harley Granville-Barker points to this speech as settling Sir Nathaniel "snugly in our affections,"⁹ and C. L. Barber feels that it shows the social genius of Shakespeare's society, in which festivities, holidays, and entertainments cut across class lines and revealed the essential humanity of all levels, a sense of community in which everyone's

⁷Shakespeare never minded repeating a joke. One is reminded of Fluellen's "Alexander the Pig" in Henry V.

⁸See John L. Nevins, "A Show of Nine Worthies," Shakespeare Quarterly, 14 (Spring 1963), 103-07, for a discussion of the effect of Shakespeare's close-stool jest on a contemporary illustrated commonplace book.

⁹Prefaces to Shakespeare, II, 418.

human qualities were recognized in their place.¹⁰ A better tribute to Sir Nathaniel than Costard's could hardly be paid. As Alexander he is o'erparted, but as Sir Nathaniel he has a firm place as honest neighbor to his people. One may properly speculate that he loves them as himself.

Sir Nathaniel has only one other appearance when, the comedy having been darkened by Mercade's death message and the lovers having been meted their penance, the dialogue of the cuckoo and the owl ends the play on a renewed festive note. One hopes that if the company is divided into two groups for the songs, Sir Nathaniel is on the side of Winter, represented by the owl, that foolish-wise bird of tradition; appropriately enough, Winter's song has coughs drowning the parson's saw. One is probably not supposed to wonder how a pair like Holofernes and Sir Nathaniel, whose previous efforts at and appreciation of verse leave their "taste and feeling" seriously open to question, could come up with such poetry as the concluding songs; it is best simply to accept and enjoy them.

To summarize the role of Sir Nathaniel in Love's Labors Lost, one may say that, although he is not absolutely necessary either to plot or theme, he has a part in the development of both. In plot development, as in character, he is hardly separable from Holofernes. Together the pair forward Berowne's exposure by sending his intercepted love poem to

¹⁰C. L. Barber, Shakespeare's Festive Comedy, (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1959), p. 96.

the King. Holofernes and Sir Nathaniel together likewise draw up the show of the Nine Worthies, thus providing a means for the warring ladies and gentlemen of the main plot to come together in mirthful reconciliation, laughing at something other than their own situation,¹¹ which in truth is ridiculous enough. Moreover, the fanatical devotion to false learning of Holofernes and Sir Nathaniel parodies the original intention of the gentlemen of Navarre, and their rustic simplicity and naivete underline the discovery of the gentlemen that isolation and unnatural seclusion from the world at large is no way to gain real knowledge.¹² Even station and consequent costume--the rustics can be assumed to be sober-suited--¹³ set off the contrast between the rustics and the ladies and gentlemen of the main plot. Above all, pedant and curate in their language exemplify affectation that Shakespeare uses as a part of the general satire in this play of linguistic excess and misapplication. One thinks immediately of Berowne's important discovery in this respect. Finally, in the person of Sir Nathaniel, Shakespeare gives readers a picture of a country curate that is sketched again lightly in Sir Oliver Martext of As You Like It¹⁴ and is fully developed in the Welsh Sir Hugh Evans of

¹¹Blaze Odell Bonazza, Shakespeare's Early Comedies: A Structural Analysis (The Hague: Mouton and Company, 1966), p. 71.

¹²Campbell, Shakespeare's Satire, p. 41.

¹³Granville - Barker, II, 426.

¹⁴Wilson, Shakespeare's Happy Comedies, p. 159, sees a

The Merry Wives of Windsor, who is an English country parson in every respect except for his accent.

As You Like It

Among the wide range of stations in life and kinds of characters in As You Like It appears briefly a cleric with the indisputably allegorical name of Sir Oliver Martext. The choice of name, one can safely say, indicates Shakespeare's awareness of the swirling religious controversy of his day. Beyond that, Sir Oliver is a slender text indeed from which to explicate with assurance anything about Shakespeare's attitude toward clerics, particularly Catholic, Anglican, or Dissenting types. Nevertheless, like the other clerics of the plays, Sir Oliver has enough speech and action to allow one to make inferences concerning Shakespeare's dramatic intention, at least. Moreover, Sir Oliver, brief as his role is, helps round out the varied types of clerics Shakespeare employs as characters in so many plays by providing a new, and unique, comic situation.

He is mentioned by Touchstone to Audrey before he enters as ". . . Sir Oliver Martext, the vicar of the next village, who hath promised to meet us in this place of the

close similarity between Love's Labors Lost and As You Like It. "Each is a burlesque upon a prevailing affectation and the characters are in many ways strikingly parallel: the exiled Duke and his co-mates are matched by the King and his fellow stoics, Touchstone and Audrey by Costard and Jaquenetta, the melancholy Jaques by the melancholy Armado, Sir Oliver Martext by Sir Nathaniel--even Le Beau by Boyet."

forest and to couple us" (III.iii.43-45). When he appears soon after he is apparently ready to perform a ceremony on the spot, even though he has a chapel, as Touchstone's question of him makes clear. He balks, however, when he finds there is no one to give the bride away. Despite the informality of the proceedings, Sir Oliver is apparently concerned with their legality if not their propriety: "Truly, she must be given or the marriage is not lawful" (III.iii.70-71). Jaques, who has been an unobserved witness to the action in this scene, steps out and offers himself to give Audrey away, but upon further questioning Touchstone about his intentions, chides him for intending to be married under a bush instead of in church, and by a "fellow" rather than a "good priest."¹⁵ The ceremony will not be a good one, Jaques goes on, comparing it to the joining of wainscot in which one panel will warp.¹⁶ His suspicions of the clown's intentions are confirmed by Touchstone's aside in response; Touchstone does not wish to be joined with Audrey too firmly. He nevertheless dismisses Sir Oliver and he and Audrey exeunt with Jaques, who has promised counsel. Jaques has no faith in the lastingness of the marriage even after it is performed by Hymen later, for he says to Touchstone as he

¹⁵Harrison, "Shakespeare's Religion," p. 283, observes: "It is a matter of individual prejudice whether in this passage the accent should fall on 'good' or 'priest'!"

¹⁶Spurgeon, Shakespeare's Imagery, pp. 126-27, notes that the craft Shakespeare deals with most often and most easily is carpentry, citing Jaques' imagery here as a good example.

departs for a secluded life with the converted Duke Frederick: "And you to wrangling, for thy loving voyage/ Is but for two months victualed" (V.iv.197-98). The prediction accords with Touchstone's frequently expressed reason for marrying, the sensual demands of nature. And Audrey, despite her eagerness, may not long bear such reproofs in silence as the one which interrupts Touchstone's discourse on duelling and challenges, "Upon a lie seven times removed-- Bear your body more seeming, Audrey--as thus, sir" (V.iv. 71-72).

The Touchstone-Audrey union rises above its inherent comedy of situation to thematic significance in providing a contrast on the one side, the Phoebe-Silvius union providing a contrast on the other, with the two "normal" unions of Rosalind-Orlando and Celia-Duke Senior. The world has room for all kinds. But Hymen's words to Touchstone and Audrey bode ill to the pair: "You and you are sure together/ As the winter to foul weather" (V.iii.141-42) and square with Jaques' sour forecast. As C. L. Barber notes, Touchstone's special status as a fool puts him outside normal society; he is comically disabled in everything he attempts, even courtship, achieving in his "romance" only a burlesque of love.¹⁷ The bungled attempt at a marriage with Sir Oliver officiating thus fits with Touchstone's general role in the play. Moreover, Sir Oliver himself is an alien figure, outside the world of Arden and dismissed with a comic song

¹⁷Shakespeare's Festive Comedy, p. 228.

almost as soon as he enters. The musical dismissal has been seen as Shakespeare's utilization of a stage convention which comically associated religion and a ballad or jig¹⁸ and with a folk tradition of "Oliver" as a ministering spirit.¹⁹ The mockery is not lost on Sir Oliver, whose last words are, "Tis no matter. Ne'er a fantastical knave of them all shall flout me out of my calling" (III.iii.108-09). Sir Oliver, despite his failure, is better intentioned than is Touchstone, after all.²⁰ A quite practical reason for Sir Oliver's being dismissed, in addition to the comedy it provides, is that Shakespeare could not legally have allowed him to present anything like a Christian marriage ceremony on stage anyway--hence Hymen a little later,²¹ where Touchstone and Audrey may take their place among the other "country copulatives" amidst the general festivities.

One other cleric of sorts besides Sir Oliver Martext

¹⁸Talbert, Elizabethan Drama, p. 27.

¹⁹Henry and Renée Kahane, "Magic and Gnosticism in the Chanson de Roland," Romance Philology, 12 (1958-59), 228 (n.). The "O sweet Oliver" song is related to a Norman tradition of Oliver as a ministering spirit. Touchstone's first soliciting, then rejecting, the elf's aid is paralleled by the song.

²⁰Stevenson, pp. 55-56, summarizing Shakespeare's handling of parsons, says they are presented as "(1) somewhat ludicrous when displaying their learning; (2) willing to give lip-service, and perhaps more, to their 'calling'; (3) in the case of Sir Nathaniel, Sir Hugh, and even Sir Oliver sincere enough in their religion. Though he [Shakespeare] can be presumed to have disliked puritans, and those who sang psalms to hornpipes, still there is no Pastor Tribulation nor Deacon Ananias in his portrait gallery."

²¹Whitaker, Shakespeare's Use of Learning, pp. 184-85.

has a part in the happy conclusion of the comedy. Most of the conflict is resolved by Rosalind's revealing her true self, but the Forest of Arden cannot provide permanent haven for its sojourners; they must return to the real world and to the light of common day. Blocking their path back is the person responsible for their exile to Arden in the first place, the usurping Duke Frederick. After the general marriage Jaques de Boys brings word that Duke Frederick, on his way to Arden with an army, ". . . meeting with an old religious man,/ After some question with him was converted/ Both from his enterprise and from the world . . ." (V.iv.166-68). Thus, Shakespeare resolves a knotty problem satisfactorily,²² adds to the general reconciliation, and provides the melancholy Jaques a refuge from the world he finds so unsatisfactory, since he intends to repair to the converted Duke for edification. Shakespeare's resolution of the problem of Duke Frederick has a meaning that lifts it above the mere deus ex machina level besides the purpose already named:

The fables ending happily require of sinners one other thing besides ineffectuality before lightly dismissing them, and that is penitence--or rather a token portion of the full schedule of open confession, repentance of sins, and amendment of life.²³

Duke Frederick's "token portion" is enough; after all, his

²²Whitaker, Shakespeare's Use of Learning, p. 182, points out that the "old religious man's" conversion of Duke Frederick, despite the improbability, eliminates the need for a pitched battle, as occurred in Lodge.

²³Harbage, p. 132.

conversion is no more strange than that of Oliver de Boys. It might be straining to suggest that Shakespeare deliberately balanced Sir Oliver Martext's botched ministry with the "old religious man's" successful one. He has been seen to do such balancing on other occasions; and it is a truism that a possible meaning occurring to critics could likewise have occurred to the writer.²⁴ It is more likely, however, that Shakespeare intended Sir Oliver as a comic vehicle in yet another example of Jaques' impatience with Touchstone, and the "old religious man" as a plot device to release all obstacles to the company's return to court, without having any coupling or contrast of the two clerics in mind.

The Merry Wives of Windsor

One of the countless testimonies to Shakespeare's genius and universality is the fact that he could write for courtly, sophisticated audiences such diverse comedies as Love's Labors Lost and The Merry Wives of Windsor, and that both would capture not only the kind of audience for which they were originally designed but would continue to appeal to the whole spectrum of intellectual and social levels. Of course, each employs contrasting main and subplots, so that, then as now, there was something for all tastes. One cannot say with certainty, however, that in Shakespeare's day any particular element in either play would have been limited

²⁴Both Bowden, p. 286, and Colby, p. 129, stress the play's being unravelled by a friar.

in appeal to a particular kind of audience. The antics of the near-farcical Falstaff and the honest wives must surely have put the already pale Fenton-Anne Page subplot out of all color before Elizabeth's court, as it does today, and there is little reason to suppose that ordinary Londoners would not have enjoyed the gentlemen of Navarre as much as those of, say, Arden.²⁵ But just as Londoners loved a romantic comedy that raised them out of their own lives for a while, so apparently Shakespeare felt that the Queen and her court would enjoy a homegrown domestic comedy filled with bourgeois types which were the staple of England. Hence The Merry Wives of Windsor.

Like Love's Labors Lost, with which it otherwise has few affinities, The Merry Wives contains a country curate of distinctly Protestant cast. Sir Hugh Evans, like Sir Nathaniel, plays no vital part in plot structure. He adds much to the comedy, however, notably through his making fritters of English. Sir Hugh is likewise a deviser of entertainments, as his troop of fairies at Herne's Oak demonstrates, and he unites in himself the offices of schoolmaster and curate that were played by Holofernes and Sir Nathaniel in the earlier comedy. Even more than the somewhat gullible Sir Nathaniel, Sir Hugh demonstrates a willingness to act as peacemaker and good neighbor and shows a

²⁵The latter conjecture cannot be supported by performance records. See The Reader's Encyclopedia of Shakespeare, p. 473.

geniality that, despite his butchery of English and his timorousness when challenged to a duel by the choleric Doctor Caius, lift him above even the suspicion of derision. As a leading authority on Shakespearean satire remarks, Sir Hugh ". . . is nowhere made an object of contempt and nowhere exposed as a fool."²⁶ Unlike Sir Nathaniel, Sir Hugh is intermittently on stage throughout the entire play, being indeed the first person addressed, and his over two hundred lines of speech is more than that of any other cleric except Friar Laurence.²⁷ All in all, he does much to offset the somewhat ludicrous portrayal of Protestant parsons in the figures of Sir Nathaniel and Sir Oliver Martext, furnishing another example of Shakespeare's characteristic balancing of good against bad cleric or good action against bad action in

²⁶Campbell, Shakespeare's Satire, p. 77. Of all the clerics in Shakespeare, Sir Hugh is the one about whose presentation critics are in closest agreement. Henry de Groot, pp. 141-42, thinks Sir Hugh is "less lovable" than Holofernes but that the characterization is good-natured. Frederick J. Harries, Shakespeare and the Welsh (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1919), p. 143, notes "a vein of shrewdness in Sir Hugh which prevents him from being ridiculous." Hazlitt, p. 213, thinks him to be "as respectable as he is laughable." Parrott, p. 269, characterizes him, in part, as ". . . something of a pedant, but he is a friendly soul on good terms with his neighbors, ready to compose a quarrel or promote a marriage." Wilson, Shakespeare's Happy Comedies, p. 88, says, "But Evans is much more than a stupid old Welsh pedant. He has the vivacity which possesses all the characters in this rollicking play. And Shakespeare commends him to us by the little human touches which he confers on him. . . ." Halliday, p. 48, conjectures an "affectionate caricature" of Shakespeare's teacher Thomas Jenkins. Hugh Hunt, Old Vic Prefaces: Shakespeare and the Producers (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1954), p. 98, views Sir Hugh as a comic schoolmaster rather than a parson. He regards him as a fine comedian, however.

²⁷The latter point is noted in Stevenson, p. 53.

a given cleric.

The play opens with Sir Hugh, true to his office, playing the role of peacemaker between Falstaff and Shallow:

If Sir John Falstaff have committed desparagements unto you, I am of the Church, and will be glad to do my benevolence to make atonements and compremises between you.

(I.i.30-34)

The quarrel between Justice and fat knight comes to nothing in the structure of the plot, but Sir Hugh soon introduces another subject that develops into the subplot, the marriage of Page's daughter: "It were a goot motion if we leave our pribbles and prabbles and desire a marriage between Master Abraham and Mistress Anne Page" (I.i.55-58).²⁸ In these two speeches are seen Sir Hugh's chief character traits, his general good humor and goodwill, and the nature of his comic appeal, his language. In the two he shows a remarkable similarity to Sir Nathaniel, the chief difference in character being that Sir Hugh is under the spell of no Holofernes, demonstrating instead a most commendable independence of mind, and the chief difference in language being Sir Hugh's outrageous Welsh dialect rather than an addiction to epithets.²⁹ He is no less a trencherman than Sir Nathaniel and probably a better Latinist. His ear for English is most inconsistent, however, for in the space of fifteen lines he

²⁸ Shakespeare apparently liked Sir Hugh's phrase "pribbles and prabbles"; he has him use it again late in the play (V.v.168-69).

²⁹ Shakespeare employed the same dialect with the pedantic Welsh captain Fluellen in Henry V. Parrott, p. 269, says it is probable that the same actor played both parts.

can correct Slender's use of "dissolutely" when he means "resolutely" (ll. 262-63) and then himself come out with "Od's plessed will! I will not be absence at the grace" (I.ii.273-74). Nor is Shakespeare above a jest at Sir Hugh's ignorance of the Prayer Book Litany, for when in response to Falstaff's "Pistol!" the confederate answers, "He hears with ears," Sir Hugh reproves him thus, "The tevil and his tam. What phrase is this? 'He hears with ear'? Why, it is affectations" (I.i.149-52).³⁰ In addition to the humor of the language-mangling, his chief contribution to the play, Sir Hugh has a minor plot function in the first scene in undertaking to enlist the aid of Doctor Caius's housekeeper, Mistress Quickly, in Slender's suit for Anne Page. This well-intentioned move will prove to be a mistake, for Doctor Caius, pursuing Anne himself, will challenge the parson to a duel. Like so many promised leads to conflict in the play, the duel will not be fought and the temporary bad feeling between curate and physician will dissolve. A tight plot is not one of the distinguishing marks of The Merry Wives.

Sir Hugh, in response to Caius' challenge, is seen in III.i, in Frogmore field, where he has been sent by the Host of the Garter Inn to await the choleric Doctor. Sir Hugh is a man of peace, as his soliloquy and singing both demonstrate. To keep up his courage he attempts to sing

³⁰ Noble, p. 181, notes that not only should the phrase have been familiar from the Litany, but that it is also found in Psalms and Samuel.

Marlowe's "Come Live With Me," mangling more than Marlowe's diction by inserting a line from the metrical version of Psalm 137, "Whenas I sat in Pabylon."³¹ All turns out well, for neither doctor nor pedant-curate really wishes to fight, and the noncombatants compose their differences and soon exeunt, complaining that the Host has made a "sot" and "vlouting-stog" (Caius's and Sir Hugh's terms, respectively) of them. The curious ability of Sir Hugh to turn his dialect off and on is shown in one passage while the duel is still threatening:

[Aside to Doctor Caius] Pray you let us not be laughingstocks to other men's humors. I desire you in friendship, and I will one way or another make you amends. [Aloud] I will knog your urinals about your knave's cogscorb for missing your meetings and appointments.³²

(III.i.87-92)

The duel that does not come off is good fun, extraneous to the plot but in keeping with the spirit of a play in which nothing is to be taken very seriously, a spirit summarized by the Host as the two are reconciled:

Shall I lose my doctor? No, he gives me the potions and the motions. Shall I lose my parson, my priest, my Sir Hugh? No, he gives me the proverbs and the noverbs. Give me thy hand, terrestrial; so. Give me thy hand, celestial; so. Boys of art, I have deceived you both.

(III.i.104-07)

Even though Sir Hugh and Doctor Caius make reference later

³¹Harrison, ed., Shakespeare: The Complete Works, p. 954 (n.).

³²Sir Hugh likes to repeat his own phrases; a little earlier (I.i.113-16) he had said, "I will knog his urinals about his knave's costard when I have goot opportunities for the ork."

to getting revenge on the Host, they do nothing about it. Both of them, indeed, attempt to forewarn the Host in the "cozen-germans" incident of IV.v. Only Falstaff, apparently, takes pleasure in the Host's misery, needing company in his own. Shakespeare may have intended Sir Hugh and Doctor Caius to have a hand in the Host's cozening in some way, but if so, he failed to develop it. They are too late in their warning, but both try. Thus, the revenge idea goes the way of the initial Shallow-Falstaff conflict. Sir Hugh will have a hand in the public humiliation of Falstaff at Herne's Oak and the Host will be privy to Fenton's plot to fool Doctor Caius and Slender, but doctor and pedant will intrigue no further along the lines promised in the aftermath of the duel episode.

The next appearance of Sir Hugh of any moment is another extraneous but very comic scene in which Mrs. Page asks the schoolmaster to examine her son William's Latin grammar. The humor arises not so much from the exchange between master and boy as from the constant interruptions and wild misinterpretations of Mistress Quickly, who here exhibits some of the vitality and humor of her portrayal in the Henry the Fourth plays. Sir Hugh is hard put to keep his patience as Mistress Quickly comments on what she thinks she hears: pulcher is "polecats," which are not so fair in her estimation; "hanghog" is Latin for bacon, she warrants; and the schoolmaster does ill to teach young William such words as "horum." Evans finally does lose his temper:

'Oman, art thou lunatics? Hast thou no understandings
for thy cases, and the numbers of the genders? Thou
art as foolish Christian creatures as I would desires.
(IV.i.70-74)

One hopes that Sir Hugh has greater command of the "cases" and "numbers of the genders" in Latin than he does in English. He exhibits gentleness and understanding with William, however, and praises him when he does well, so that he gives the appearance of being a kind, efficient teacher and no tyrant. Even though he reminds William that forgetfulness may bring on the rod, his general manner makes it doubtful that he relies very much on that favorite Elizabethan pedagogical instrument.³³

Sir Hugh enters the main plot most directly in his role in the third and final discomfiture of the lecherous fat knight at Herne's Oak. He had been on the scene in Ford's first angry search of his house, when Falstaff made his escape under the foul linen, and also in the second search, when Falstaff escaped disguised as the witch of Brentford. In the latter episode he had displayed closer observation than the others in spying a "great peard" under Falstaff's muffler. On both occasions he had reproved Ford for his jealousy, in the second urging him to pray instead of allowing his imagination to run away with him. In IV.iv,

³³ Campbell, Shakespeare's Satire, p. 77, denies that Sir Hugh here or elsewhere is made an object of derision but thinks that Doctor Caius is. The dialect of the latter is no more ridiculous than Sir Hugh's, he grants, but Doctor Caius, a Jonsonian type, ". . . is the slave of a humor which is presented derisively." I agree that the two exhibit a differing humor, both in the Jonsonian and the usual sense.

however, where both he and Ford are told by the wives of Falstaff's siege and the two previous humiliations, he is quite ready to aid in carrying out a third jest in which Falstaff's degradation will be public and final. Despite Sir Hugh's suggestion that the lecherous knight may have suffered such terrors already that he will not make another attempt, the wives know Falstaff's persistency and insist that he will do whatever they tell him. Evans enthusiastically agrees to prepare his schoolchildren for their part: "It is admirable pleasures and fery honest knaveries" (IV. iv.80-81).

Prepare them he does, and himself as well. The episode at Herne's Oak is the only "spectacle" in this otherwise realistic comedy and as such is at variance with the prevailing tone and mood of the play.³⁴ However, it serves several useful functions. Chief among them is the plot and thematic function of the public exposure of Falstaff. In his own eyes Falstaff has been badly used already, and he complains bitterly of it to Ford as Brook, but he has not yet been made to repent his vanity. Like Malvolio, he is as yet unrepentant and unregenerate; unlike Malvolio, he is not to be allowed to remain so. As plot function the Herne's Oak episode also allows Fenton to spirit Anne Page away. As in A Midsummer Night's Dream and Love's Labor's

³⁴Harrison, ed., Shakespeare: The Complete Works, p. 939, states, "The episode of the fairies at the conclusion of the play is unnecessary; they are introduced simply to give an opportunity for the small boys to sing and dance before the original courtly audience."

Lost, the Herne's Oak entertainment provides a closing spectacle in which a group of characters can exhibit considerable satiric wit at the expense of the entertainers, in this case chiefly Falstaff in his ridiculous horns and guise of Herne the Hunter, but also Slender and Doctor Caius, who are likewise gulled. Finally, the bright colors of the "fairies," the candles, the songs, the poetry, and the punishment of Falstaff by burning all mingle into a most delightful conclusion structurally, thematically, visually, and aurally. If the speech of Sir Hugh, Mistress Quickly, and Pistol is in matter and manner totally at variance with their speech in the rest of the play, it is nevertheless fitted to the tone of this episode and causes no problems.

As the fairies are sent about their tasks in Windsor castle Sir Hugh gives the fairy Bede instructions in accord not only with his role as chief of the fairies in the masque --he is dressed as a satyr--but also with his offices as schoolmaster and parson in the rest of the play:

Go you, and where you find a maid
That, ere she sleep, has thrice her prayers said,
Raise up the organs of her fantasy.
Sleep she as sound as careless infancy.
But those as sleep and think not on their sins,
Pinch them, arms, legs, backs, shoulders, sides, and
shins.

(V.v.53-58)

Sir Hugh here is doubly, or triply, in character. As Falstaff remarks after the watchers of the fun have revealed themselves to him: "Am I ridden with a Welsh goat too? . . . 'Tis time I were choked with a piece of toasted cheese"

(V.v.145-46). Even in this Sir Hugh has the last word:

"Seese is not good to give putter. Your pelly is all putter" (V.v.148-49). Falstaff, to his chagrin, has indeed "lived to stand at the taunt of one that makes fritters of English."³⁵

On this note soon ends a comedy in which a Welsh parson, pedantic, sententious, and unsure of tongue but also earnest, honest, and sound of heart, plays a minor but captivating role. If at times he seems more prankster and pedant than parson, the circumstances of the action seem to call for it. Since he is a necessary part of the Herne Oak episode he could hardly be expected to marry any one of the wooers of Anne Page, marriages which Fenton through the Host, Slender through Page, and Doctor Caius through Mrs. Page had arranged with other clerics at nearby places.³⁶

³⁵The penchant of the Welsh for cheese provides several jokes or occasions for good humor in the play. Sir Hugh wants to make an end of his dinner--"There's pippins and cheese to come"--in I.ii.12. Ford in II.ii.316-19 says, "I will rather trust a Fleming with my butter, Parson Hugh the Welshman with my cheese, an Irishman with my aqua-vitae bottle, or a thief to walk my ambling gelding, than my wife with herself." Falstaff, when Sir Hugh in disguise "smells a man of middle earth," says, "Heavens defend me from that Welsh fairy, lest he transform me to a piece of cheese!" (V.v.85-86)--this even though Sir Hugh in disguise loses his Welsh dialect.

³⁶Hunt, pp. 98-99, arguing that Sir Hugh's parson side is almost nonexistent, cites his having no part in the marriages as part of his reason. It is true that Sir Hugh performs no dramatic function that a lay schoolmaster could not have done as well. Shakespeare was accustomed to the idea of divines as schoolmasters, however, having almost certainly studied under them himself in Stratford. Sir Hugh is given a moral earnestness that seems to me to go beyond that of even the sternest pedant. For example, Sir Hugh says to Falstaff: "Sir John Falstaff, serve Got, and

If such projection is permissible, Sir Hugh may be visualized, now that the fun has ended so well, as resuming his accustomed place among the company of stout English types that make up the principal characters of this most English of Shakespeare's comedies, there to toast his cheese, teach the village children, and reconcile his neighbors' differences. Beyond his moralizing, too little of his office as parson has been seen to allow conjectures as to his activities there. Whatever they are, they must be assumed to be acceptable and adequate for the men and women of Windsor.

Hamlet

In only two of Shakespeare's tragedies do clerics have speaking parts, Romeo and Juliet and Hamlet. Friar Laurence has been shown as performing important plot and thematic functions in the earlier tragedy; in contrast, the Priest in Hamlet speaks only twice for a total of thirteen lines and is, comparatively, a most minor character dramatically and thematically. Yet he figures in an important episode in a most interesting fashion.

leave your desires, and fairies will not pinse you" (V.v. 136-37). At Ford's "Well said, fairy Hugh," the curate turns to him and says, "And leave your jealousies too, I pray you" (V.v.138-40). Stevenson, who argues throughout his study that Shakespeare generally disliked clerics and presented them unfavorably, makes an exception in Sir Hugh's case, whom he characterizes as a preacher-prankster (pp. 53-54). Only Colby of the critics I have seen regards Sir Hugh unfavorably; he states (p. 127): "Sir Nathaniel is obviously a satire on the spouting young churchmen of Elizabeth's day, and Sir Hugh comes posthaste out of Windsor . . . too fresh and flippant to have travelled across even a half a century."

The lengthy "graveyard scene" (V.i) has been in progress for some 240 lines when Horatio and Hamlet spy the King, Queen, and courtiers entering the graveyard in a funeral procession. Hamlet, whose thoughts have been much on death and the base uses to which man may return, notes immediately that the rites are "maimed," that the simplicity of the office indicates that the corpse was a suicide. The presence of Claudius and Gertrude shows that it³⁷ was a person of rank in the kingdom. Hamlet, his curiosity aroused, retires to observe further.

Twice Laertes has to ask, "What ceremony else?" before the Priest replies:

Her obsequies have been as far enlarged
As we have warranty. Her death was doubtful,
And but that great command o'ersways the order,
She should in ground unsanctified have lodged
Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,
Shards, flints, and pebbles should be thrown on her.
Yet here she is allowed her virgin crants,
Her maiden strewments and the bringing home
Of bell and burial.

(V.i.249-57)

To Laertes' "Must there no more be done?" the Priest insists, "No more be done./ We should profane the service of the dead/ To sing a requiem and such rest to her/ As to peace-parted souls" (V.i.258-61).

The Priest's speeches have been quoted in their entirety because they throw light on Laertes' anger at them and because they furnish occasion for audience sympathy with the rightness of that anger--at least in the twentieth cen-

³⁷The pronoun is Hamlet's. He does not realize the identity of the corpse for some twenty-five lines.

tury, if not at the beginning of the seventeenth. That Shakespeare should have Ophelia subjected to the indignity of "maimed rites" accords with the pathos with which her situation and actions are endowed throughout, here shown in culmination. The response of the Priest to Laertes likewise seems to go beyond his ecclesiastical function into what Laertes regards as a personal affront, especially, one might logically conjecture, in the Priest's complaint of Ophelia's being "allowed her virgin crants,/ Her maiden strewments."³⁸ To a grief-stricken brother the maimed rites themselves are an insult, but to hear the officiant complain of other graveside courtesies that have nothing to do with the alleged suicide of the obviously demented girl must likewise underlie Laertes' angry outburst at the "churlish priest." Despite the fact that

³⁸Noble, pp. 84-85, believes that the rites were intended as Roman rather than Anglican, since "maimed rites" are provided for in Roman ritual, the Anglican Prayer Book makes no provision for a requiem mass, and Elizabethan liturgy made no provision for refusal of Church benefits to suicides. Kittredge and Ribner, eds., The Complete Works of Shakespeare, p. 1095 (n.), call attention to the fact that the First Folio identifies the officiant who speaks at l. 212 and l. 221 as Priest but that the Second Quarto has "Doct." Harrison, ed., Shakespeare: The Complete Works, p. 927 (n.), has the following gloss on the entrance of the procession at line 240: "The stage directions in early texts are less elaborate. Q2 notes, curtly, Enter K.Q. Laertes and the corse. F1 has Enter King, Queen, Laertes and a coffin, with Lords Attendant. Q1 prints Enter King and Queen, Laertes and other lords, with a priest after the coffin. This was probably how the scene was originally staged. The modern directions ignore the whole significance of the 'maimed rites'--Ophelia's funeral is insultingly simple." One must agree with Harrison's feeling that only one priest was intended to be present, which supposition is supported by both text and context.

Laertes is unsympathetically presented both before and after this episode, Shakespeare almost certainly intends the audience to be on his side here. The Priest's unyielding and grudging words smack of a pharisaical legalism that holds him up to audience disapproval despite his stand that he is doing all that canonical law allows--and even more than he should because of "great command."³⁹

All emotional force is on the side of the dead girl and hence on that of Laertes. The Priest is therefore placed in an unfavorable light--an unusual position in Shakespeare for a cleric performing an official duty. Because the nature of the service is so sketchily presented the episode provides no firm conclusion as to Shakespeare's Anglican and Roman sympathies and prejudices. But that Laertes' designation of the priest as "churlish" would receive audience approval, despite the young man's deviousness otherwise, can hardly be doubted. The episode is a fitting preparation for Hamlet's outburst when he discovers the identity of the corpse.

³⁹Stevenson, pp. 29-30, maintains that the Priest's offering no comfort and reciting no words of scripture or Anglican or Roman prescribed formula "should not be considered a mere slip," but conforms to an observable pattern in all the plays set in Christian times. For an interesting discussion of the legal points of Ophelia's death and some historical precedents that Shakespeare may have had in mind, see Keeton's chapter entitled "The Death and Burial of Ophelia," pp. 185-92.

Twelfth Night

Twelfth Night, like a number of Shakespeare's plays, has a cleric performing the conventional religious office of betrothal or marriage, in this case the betrothal of Olivia and Sebastian. The Priest in Twelfth Night thus functions as do the Priest in The Taming of the Shrew and Friar Francis in Much Ado about Nothing in the romantic comedies and like Friar Peter and Friar Laurence in other kinds of plays. Sir Oliver Martext was willing to perform a like office in As You Like It but was prevented. Just as these clerics have other functions besides performing marriages, however, so does the Priest in Twelfth Night function in other capacities. Having united Olivia and "Cesario," he is later called upon to substantiate the lady's story, only to have Cesario deny that such a ceremony took place. The entrance of Sebastian a few moments later resolves this particular comic confusion, but the Priest's story momentarily furthers it.⁴⁰

The attitude of both Olivia and Sebastian toward the Priest at his first appearance displays the respect, even reverence, toward clerics that is typical, despite several notable exceptions, of characters in the plays having dealings with them. The Priest is apparently a member of

⁴⁰For an analysis of Sebastian's function in plot and theme development, see John J. W. Weaver, "The Other Twin: Sebastian's Relationship to Viola and the Theme of Twelfth Night," in Essays in Honor of Esmond Linworth Marilla, ed. Thomas Austin Kirby and William John Olive (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 89-100.

Olivia's household⁴¹ and as such can be presumed to have earned her trust. She apparently has gone to fetch him in IV.iii, leaving Sebastian to muse alone on the strange things happening to him. Olivia, of course, mistakes Sebastian for Cesario, and Sebastian considers whether either he or the lady might be mad, deciding finally that such is not the case but recognizing that "There's something in't/ That is deceivable" (IV.iii.20-21). He has fallen in love, however, and when Olivia appears with the Priest he is quite ready to repair to the nearby chantry, there to plight his troth to the lady. Whether the ceremony can be considered a marriage or merely a betrothal cannot be conclusively determined by the Priest's later description of it (V.i.159-64), but the question is of no real moment: the pair will stick, as their obviously sincere declarations in IV.iii show.⁴²

The Priest's appearance in V.i, where Olivia calls upon him for confirmation of the ceremony, fulfills several functions besides contributing to the momentary confusion of all present. Porter Williams, Jr. points to the

⁴¹Parrott, p. 183.

⁴²Harrison, ed., Shakespeare: The Complete Works, p. 874 (n.), regards the ceremony as a formal betrothal but not a marriage. So do Ribner and Kittredge, eds., The Complete Works of Shakespeare, p. 425 (n.). Noble, p. 212, concedes that IV.iii indicates a betrothal but argues from the Priest's later account that an actual wedding took place, citing as support Olivia's addressing Cesario as "husband," the "mutual joindure of hands," the kiss, and the exchange of rings. The "mutual joindure of hands" he regards as especially important, stating that in a betrothal this was not done.

Priest's solemn declaration as signifying "the richest fulfillment of spiritual capacities under the surface of error."⁴³ The later unmasking will only reveal what has already been accomplished under error, he notes. Thus, although love is blind in this case, it is no less love. John Hollander links the solemnity of the Priest's rhetoric and his reference to the passage of time since the ceremony--"Since when, my watch hath told me, toward my grave/ I have travelled but two hours" (V.i.165-66)--with the intrusion into the play of a real world, a sign that "surfeiting" is occurring and that the play will soon be ending.⁴⁴ Derek A. Traversi likewise sees the Priest's declaration as beginning to "shift the clouds" after Viola's intense declaration of devotion to the angry Duke as she obeys his command to come away to be sacrificed,⁴⁵ a declaration that prepares the way for her later unmasking. In short, the Priest's account of the marriage, with its sacramental imagery that lifts earthly love into the realms of the sacred and at the same time interjects a most mundane note (all of this having occurred but two hours before), does much to dispel the confusion even as it momentarily furthers it. Olivia, at least, has been

⁴³Porter Williams, Jr., "Mistakes in Twelfth Night and Their Resolution: A Study in Some Relationships of Plot and Theme," PMLA, 76 (1961), 196.

⁴⁴John Hollander, "Twelfth Night and the Morality of Indulgence," Sewanee Review, 67 (1959), 234-35.

⁴⁵Traversi, An Approach to Shakespeare, I, 347.

satisfactorily disposed of and the play can move on to the others.

The sole character in Twelfth Night who is not disposed of in the general resolution of Act V is Malvolio. The two pairs of lovers, Viola and Orsino, and Olivia and Sebastian, find each other to resolve the tension of the main plot. Of the chief characters of the subplot, Sir Toby and Maria are reported as married already, Feste has had his fun at Malvolio's expense, and Sir Andrew has his richly deserved bloody coxcomb. Malvolio, however, is not reconciled to his situation, nor is he shown as changed in any way; his last line is the bitter "I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you" (V.i.386). Perhaps Olivia and the Duke will succeed in their announced desire to mollify his wrath and wounded pride, but in the play he ends as he began: a ridiculous figure of a man puffed up with self-importance.

Although the chief means of his discomfiture are Maria and Sir Toby, Feste has an important hand in it, particularly in his posing as Sir Topas the priest and visiting Malvolio during his incarceration in the dark room as treatment of his "madness." The episode thus comes within the scope of this study, for Feste, although he merely assumes the role of priest, as does Duke Vincentio that of Friar, nevertheless plays his part with such authority that he convinces even Malvolio of his authenticity. In addition to furthering the satiric comedy in regard to

Malvolio, the clown serves thematic functions in his role as Sir Topas the priest.

It is apparently Maria who comes up with the idea of Feste's putting on gown and beard and acting the part of the curate to "comfort" the imprisoned steward. As she leaves to fetch Sir Toby for the fun, Feste muses on his new mask:

Well, I'll put it on, and I will dissemble myself in 't, and I would I were the first that ever dissembled in such a gown. I am not tall enough to become the function well, nor lean enough to be thought a good student, but to be said an honest man and a good housekeeper goes as fairly as to say a careful man and a great scholar.

(IV.ii.4-12)

The remark on dissembling has been read as a gibe at Puritanism, since a gown was the mark of a Geneva minister.⁴⁶ Certainly the tenor of the whole passage is hardly respectful toward clerics, another of the fairly uncommon instances outside the history plays in which Shakespeare allows a character to express such sentiments. It is likely that the satire is directed toward a type or class of clerics rather than to all of them. There are several

⁴⁶ See Stevenson, p. 55; Brandes, p. 232. Elbert N. W. Thompson, The Controversy between the Puritans and the Stage (1903; rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1966), pp. 250-53, commenting on Shakespeare and Puritanism, sees few references to Puritans in Shakespeare's plays compared to those of his contemporaries and thinks even these are made with little or no emotional feeling. The explanation, he conjectures, is that Shakespeare was tolerant himself and refused to attack even when as a playwright he had cause for retaliation. In connection with the gown, Sir Hugh's embarrassment at being caught without it in Frogmore field should be recalled (Merry Wives III.i.34-35).

derogatory references in the play to Puritanism; and Malvolio, despite Maria's demurrer, is often read as a satiric portrait of the Puritan stereotype. Feste's reference to clerics' becoming good housekeepers instead of scholars appears to be a hic at clerical marriage;⁴⁷ and, although the reference would logically include Anglicans who were not Puritans at all, it is especially appropriate to the Puritan temperament. Malvolio himself is a good housekeeper. The passage thus appears to be directed toward Puritan parsons rather than toward all clerics.

Whether Shakespeare intends anything more than a good Chaucerian jest in Feste's musing cannot be authoritatively proved, but that the subsequent masquerade is hilarious to the plotters and painful to Malvolio is never in doubt. Nor is the general comic effect; Malvolio seems to evoke little sympathy even in the brutal jest of the dark room.⁴⁸ Feste plays his role to the hilt; after his first stentorian "What ho, I say! Peace in this prison" (IV.ii.21), Sir

⁴⁷ Bowden, pp. 281-82.

⁴⁸ My estimate of the effect of the scene is a matter of critical disagreement. For instance, Charles Lamb, "The Essays of Elia" and "The Last Essays of Elia" (London: Oxford Univ. Press, The World's Classics, 1946), p. 196, defends the dignity and good sense of the steward. Barber, p. 255, remarks: "There is no way to settle just how much of Malvolio's pathos should be allowed to come through when he is down and out in the dark hole." He goes on, however, to assert: "To play the dark-house scene for pathos, instead of making fun out of the pathos . . . is to ignore the dry comic light which shows up Malvolio's virtuousness as a self-limiting automatism" (p. 256). Wilson, Shakespeare's Happy Comedies, p. 175, strikes a still widespread note in feeling that considerable sympathy for Malvolio is generated here.

Toby knows that the clown's "counterfeit" will come off well.⁴⁹ It does. To Malvolio's plea that Sir Topas go to Olivia, Feste pretends to recognize the voice of a fiend possessing Malvolio that will allow him to talk of nothing but ladies. Feste is correct, of course, in view of Malvolio's impossible pretensions and hopes. A curious tension underlies the action as Feste continues to dispute with Malvolio, insisting the dark room is light and that Malvolio must hold the opinion of Pythagoras concerning metempsychosis before the "priest" can call him sane. The tension, and the mixed reaction to the episode as comedy, arises in large part from the eminently sane responses of the imprisoned steward to the "mad" questions and comments of Feste as Sir Topas. Malvolio knows the house is dark, despite Feste's assertions to the contrary. He also gives a dignified, responsible answer to Feste's query on his view of Pythagoras's metempsychosis theory: "I think nobly of the soul, and no way approve his opinion" (IV.ii.59-60). Maria and Sir Toby, fearful of pursuing the jest too far, exeunt. Feste, however, is not yet finished, and lapses back into his own voice for more fun at Malvolio's expense.

The major point to be made about the Sir Topas part of this episode, a part not quite concluded, although

⁴⁹Isabella's words on seeking admission to Claudio's cell are "What ho! Peace here, grace and good company!" (Meas. for Meas. III.i.44). Noble, p. 211, notes in connection with Feste's greeting that the Book of Common Prayer in the "Visitation of the Sick" office directs the priest to say "Peace be to this house" on entrance.

Malvolio apparently thinks the "priest" has departed, is that despite Malvolio's stubborn clinging to reality in the face of Sir Topas' "madness," he is nevertheless as benighted as ever concerning himself and his pretensions. He has learned nothing, nor will he. To the end he remains outside the festive world of the other characters and thus deserves the darkness and isolation of his life, of which the dark room is a symbol. He remains "a prisoner of his own self-estimate."⁵⁰ Feste had earlier said in a wit-combat with Olivia, "Lady, cucullus non facit monachum. That's as much to say as I wear not motley in my brain" (I.v.61-63). Nor does he in his entire dealing with Malvolio; rather, the austere, pretentious steward is the one who wears motley in his brain and thus does not know either himself or his place. Feste in applying the curative of the dark room is acting a role in the subplot similar to that which he plays in the main plot, penetrating below the apparent to the real, the false to the true.⁵¹ Thus, Feste as Sir Topas sees clearly enough, despite his mask, and his taunting of Malvolio has its own kind of sense consistent with his clarity of vision. The other characters, especially Malvolio, are more blind

⁵⁰ Traversi, An Approach to Shakespeare, I, 344.

⁵¹ Peter G. Philiass, Shakespeare's Romantic Comedies: The Development of Their Form and Meaning (Chapel Hill: The Univ. of N. Carolina Press, 1966), pp. 273-74. Hollander, p. 226, points out that few of the characters of this play are what they appear to be, including Malvolio in his black suit, but that the Fool's clear insight into his own actions is continuous.

than he. The rest are to see the light, finally, but not Malvolio, who will remain in darkness even after his release.⁵² Feste as Sir Topas and, a little later, as the Vice in his song which concludes the scene, has cried ah, ha! to the Devil in a significant episode.

⁵²Not all critics see Malvolio as persisting in error, perhaps feeling that he should be cured by what he undergoes. For varying views on the question, see Champion, p. 94; Campbell, Shakespeare's Satire, p. 86; Julian Markels, "Shakespeare's Confluence of Tragedy and Comedy: Twelfth Night and King Lear," Shakespeare Quarterly, 15 (1964), 85-86; Joseph T. McCullen, Jr., "Madness and Isolation of Character in Elizabethan and Early Stuart Drama," Studies in Philology, 48 (1951), 211.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Shakespeare uses clerical characters in twenty-one plays, their employment ranging from mere mention in connection with some piece of action to fully-developed characters who perform vital functions in both plot and development of theme. At the one extreme, Friar Francis and Friar Lawrence in Two Gentlemen of Verona do not appear in person but are merely alluded to by other characters, the former providing an excuse for Silvia to leave her father's house to join the banished Valentine (she says she is going to confession), the latter confirming the Duke's fears by being reported as having seen the eloping daughter in the forest. At the other extreme, Friar Laurence of Romeo and Juliet performs not only the plot functions of the two clerics of Two Gentlemen of Verona but is also developed into a rounded character in his own right and plays an indispensable role in both action and meaning of the play. Duke Vincentio in Measure for Measure initiates or resolves every major plot complication in the play and manipulates both characters and action so that not only justice but also mercy is realized in the final dispensation. Several clerics are therefore principals in the plays in which they appear.

Mere incidental employment of clerics occurs but is relatively uncommon. When clerics are employed at all, they usually perform significant plot or thematic functions. Although he speaks little, Friar Francis of Much Ado about Nothing implements one of the most crucial complications in the main plot. The Priest of Twelfth Night performs much the same kind of function on a lesser scale. When clerics do not function significantly in plot development they frequently enunciate important thematic motifs, as, for example, Aemilia's lecture to Adriana in The Comedy of Errors on the proper behavior for a wife, or the Bishop of Carlisle's strictures in Richard II to first Richard, then Bolingbroke, on the responsibilities of kings and subjects. In the instances where clerics are unimportant in either plot or thematic development, they usually serve in such a capacity as to shape tone or mood. The Tutor of Rutland in 3 Henry VI points up the senseless butchery of the War of the Roses, and the Priest in Hamlet makes both characters and audience feel the bleak finality of death. Clerics in several plays add much to the comedy, notably Sir Nathaniel of Love's Labors Lost and Sir Hugh Evans of The Merry Wives of Windsor. Shakespeare's clerics thus fill widely varying roles in the plays in which they appear, but usually perform a significant function when they appear at all.

In the traditional three-fold division of the plays--comedies, histories, and tragedies--clerics function most

importantly and extensively in the histories. Every one of the ten English history plays has at least one clerical character and most have several. In almost all of them the clerics serve central plot or thematic uses. In the first two Henry the Sixth plays Cardinal Beaufort illustrates in his intransigence and self-serving the kind of civil discord that will bring on the bloody and divisive War of the Roses. Richard III manipulates clerics along with everyone else to his own ends until they manage to slip away and join the Earl of Richmond. When after writing the First Tetralogy Shakespeare goes back to the reign and deposition of Richard II, which initiates the flow of history that finally leads to the Tudor settlement, he uses a cleric, the Bishop of Carlisle, to prophesy the bloody consequences of deposition of a lawful king, a prophecy which is one of the major themes uniting the two tetralogies. In the troubled reign of the usurper, Henry IV, another cleric, the Archbishop of York, professing Richardian principle, provides in continued rebellion an important source of Henry's grief. In the concluding play of the Second Tetralogy, clerics are used to confirm Henry V's reformation and to lend moral sanction to his French campaign. In the two English history plays outside the two tetralogies, the English crown is shown in conflict with powerful churchmen who would manipulate public affairs to their own ends and to the detriment of Respublica. Clerics in the English histories thus play important

dramatic roles.

In the comedies Shakespeare employs clerics in sharply contrasting ways: they tend to be either conventional clerical figures performing conventional clerical offices or comic figures whose cloth is incidental. Among the conventional clerics performing conventional offices are Aemila of The Comedy of Errors; Friar Francis in Much Ado about Nothing; Friar Peter, Friar Thomas, and Francisca in Measure for Measure; and the Priest in Twelfth Night. Among those whose clerical collar or gown is incidental to their place in the general comedy are the priest who marries Petruchio and Katharina (since it is Petruchio's taming, not the priest, which is the focus of Gremio's description), Sir Nathaniel of Love's Labors Lost, Sir Oliver Martext of As You Like It, and Sir Hugh Evans of The Merry Wives of Windsor. To say that the clerics of the comedies tend to perform either conventional religious offices or to function as comic figures first and clerics second is not to say that their roles are insignificant or that there are not important exceptions to the two general categories suggested here. Among those whose function is conventionally clerical, Friar Francis of Much Ado and the Priest in Twelfth Night not only add to the plot complication of their respective plays but also enunciate sentiments wholly in accord with the themes. Aemilia's being reunited with her long-lost husband and children helps redeem The Comedy of Errors from the farcical tone which

continually threatens it. Friar Peter and Friar Thomas in Measure for Measure, who are genuine friars, lend moral authority to Duke Vincentio's masquerade as Friar Lodowick. Among those whose dramatic function stresses comedy rather than the collar, Sir Nathaniel, Sir Hugh, and even Sir Oliver are portrayed in such a way that their gowns, if not strictly necessary to their dramatic functions, nevertheless sit well on their shoulders. Figures of fun along with the other characters, they are not shown in any essential way to be unworthy of the clerical office they represent.

In Measure for Measure clerical status is used to lend moral authority to a principal and to intensify the personal dilemma of another. Duke Vincentio is able to observe how matters in Vienna go in his "absence" and finally to right them as a direct result of his assuming the identity of a friar. He uses his clerical authority to arrange the substitution of Mariana for Isabella in Angelo's garden; similarly, his robes give him access not only to the prison but also to the states of mind of the other characters, so that he can arrange the moral ending of the action. Isabella's being a votaress of St. Clare intensifies the irony of Angelo's temptation and fall and adds to the irony of both Isabella's predicament and her later redemption from the self-righteousness to which she is in danger of succumbing. Measure for Measure is Shakespeare's best example of moral ends attained by clerical

means.

Clerics figure least often in the tragedies, being represented in only two. Of these, however, Romeo and Juliet features Friar Laurence as both prime motivator of the action and choric commentator on the causes and meaning of the tragedy. Friar Laurence is one of Shakespeare's most fully-developed clerics; next to the lovers he is the most fully-developed character in Romeo and Juliet. Friar John, another clerical character, is used as a mere plot device, but Friar Laurence, although he is important in plot development, rises above that utilitarian function. Friar Laurence alone among the sad survivors knows the full story of the lovers; to him it is a pitiable tale of human error, despite the Duke's assertion of the hand of Providence in it.

Friar Laurence's view of the young lovers' tragedy may furnish a key to the disappearance of clerics from Shakespeare's works after about 1604. Christian clerics would necessarily be absent from the tragedies set in pre-Christian times, of course. Conversely, they might logically be expected to play important roles in the English history plays of the 1590's since Shakespeare was bound to some degree by his sources and by popular tradition. However, absence of clerics from the tragedies, especially, and to a lesser extent from the romances, probably goes beyond dictates of historical verisimilitude into something more basic in Shakespeare's philosophy and artistic vision.

I should like to make the highly conjectural suggestion that as Shakespeare continued to develop as both student of mankind and as dramatic artist he came more and more to feel the mystery of the relationship between human endeavor and human destiny, and that he therefore avoided making clerics a part of the action of his later plays so that the question of the relationship between human responsibility and Providence, at least a specifically Christian Providence, would not be clouded by the presence of clerical figures who might be expected to explain all occurrences on a Providential basis. One of the perplexing questions in Romeo and Juliet is the degree of human responsibility when weighed against the role of the "stars" in the tragic ending of the action. The pity and terror of the tragedy are clear enough, but Friar Laurence by his very being and presence comes very near negating them by attributing the tragedy to Providence as he stumbles hastily toward the Capulet tomb. Later he remains silent when the Duke expresses the same idea, and it is missing from the Friar's bare account of the events to the assembled survivors. Shakespeare, it is submitted, became too much enthralled with the mystery of man's nature and human conduct to give simple answers to questions of man's existence and meaning, especially when the answer--that all that happens is the will of God--is no answer at all to a problem in drama. The clerics of the English histories, always so ready to explain historical events in terms of

God's will, would be out of keeping with the spirit of the later plays. Shakespeare's settings and subject matter made it easy to banish them; his artistic intent seems to have made it necessary to do so.

All this is not to say that Shakespeare was anti-clerical, or that he became a religious skeptic as he grew in years and experience. The most morally culpable clerics in the plays, Cardinal Wolsey, Cardinal Beaufort, and Cardinal Pandulph, were inherited from the chronicles and from tradition. Even they are not so much wicked clerics as amoral politicians, and morally are no worse than the laymen around them. They behave like men, which means that they sometimes adopt mistaken courses of action and exhibit human frailties. When they exhibit less than ideal moral qualities they are shown to exhibit them as men rather than as clerics. Conversely, when clerics are employed in official offices they are almost uniformly treated with respect by both playwright and the other characters of the plays.

The most telling indications of what this study maintains is Shakespeare's respectful treatment of clerics are the care with which the dramatist balances action by a given cleric which might indicate moral culpability with an ennobling action or attitude, and the care with which cleric is balanced against cleric so that as a class they are not held up to audience disapprobation. There are individual exceptions to this general practice, but not so

many that a case can be made for anticlericalism on Shakespeare's part. In Cardinal Beaufort, for example, Shakespeare presents his most grasping and self-seeking cleric, but Beaufort is shown as only one of many politicians flourishing under the reign of a weak king who by nature and temperament is unfitted for the crown. Cardinal Pandolph and Cardinal Wolsey are similarly set in opposition to the crown and have little to redeem them as clerics except for, in Wolsey's case, his self-knowledge and repentance after his fall. These examples, however, are balanced by a number of clerics in the histories who, even though some of them are on the wrong side politically, nevertheless demonstrate in their persons and actions an integrity which redeems them from criticism. The Bishop of Carlisle in Richard II, for example, is a spokesman for the Richardian concept of kingship, a concept which crumbles before the ruthless practicality of the Lancastrian Henry. The Second Tetralogy demonstrates Shakespeare's acceptance of and, finally, approval of Lancastrian pragmatism. Yet Carlisle, like Richard, has a point which deserves a respectful hearing, and he engages audience sympathy in expressing it to almost the same degree as the hapless poet-king. In the Henry the Fourth plays the Archbishop of York continues the struggle against the Lancasters in Richard's name, and thus, while on the losing--and wrong--side politically, is not discredited as either a person or a cleric. To say that Shakespeare holds clerics as a class up to audience

disapproval is to ignore the care with which he balances audience sympathy in such broad matters as the national and dynastic struggles which form the political subject matter of the English histories.

Clerics in the histories are not only balanced against each other in such a way as to excuse them as a class from the charge of satiric intent or moral disapproval on the dramatist's part, they are also presented again and again as exhibiting in their own actions a balance which further redeems them from the charge. If, for example, Shakespeare shows the Bishop of Ely in the scene of Hastings' fall truckling to the power of Richard, the dramatist is careful later to show Ely joining Richmond and to have Richard expressing dismay at the defection. Even in the English histories, in which clerics' religious offices are necessarily subordinate to their political functions, Shakespeare exhibits a balance of presentation which attests to both his fairness and humanity.

In the comedies and tragedies, in which clerics tend to assume more conventionally religious offices and roles than in the histories, clerics earn even more respect and audience approval. With the possible exceptions of Sir Oliver Martext and the Priest in Hamlet, none of them are more--or less--than earnest, moral servants of the Church who do their duty as they see it. In most cases they perform conciliatory functions that help to resolve the tragic or comic discord in an ethically and dramatically

satisfying manner. Chief among these are Friar Laurence, Duke Vincentio, Friar Francis, the Priest in Twelfth Night, and Aemilia. When the clerical office is subordinated in the comedies to the general merriment, as with Sir Nathaniel and Sir Hugh, no ridicule is apparent; instead, the clerics help shape the comic resolution. In conclusion, it may be said that Shakespeare's essential humanity, balanced wisdom, and unobtrusively moral outlook on life combine with his poetic and dramatic genius in his treatment of clerics so that some of them join other of Shakespeare's dramatic characterizations in the realm of literary immortality.

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